Lebanese Salafis between the Gulf and Europe

Development, Fractionalization and Transnational Networks of Salafism in Lebanon



ZOLTAN PALL



AMSTERDAM UNIVERSITY PRESS

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Martin van Bruinessen

Within little more than a decade, Salafism has transformed from a marginal and little noticed phenomenon into the most conspicuous Islamic trend among European Muslims, keenly watched by security experts, journalists, and academics. Although probably the majority of Salafis in Europe are apolitical and reject violence, in the public mind the term Salafism is closely associated with two iconic events: the attacks on the symbols of American economic and military power of September 11, 2001, and in the Netherlands, the murder of Theo van Gogh on November 2, 2004.

It is not just public awareness of Salafism that has rapidly reached high levels; Salafism in its various forms appears to exert a real attraction on serious young Muslims in Europe. Judging by its prominent presence in cyberspace, it appears to be the most significant as well as the most rapidly growing trend among young Muslims. Appearances may be deceptive, however, and observers who have gone beyond the movement's Internet presence and attempted to count how many active followers it actually has have concluded that Salafis are a relatively isolated minority even among committed Muslims.[1]

The number of actual followers of Salafi movements may be hard to assess because of the absence of a clear demarcation between Salafi and non-Salafi as well as the fluidity in membership of discussion groups, chat groups, and other forms of association. Several scholars, however, have given reasons for why Salafism may be attractive to young Muslims. The anthropologist Martijn de Koning, who carried out participant research as a youth worker in a Moroccan mosque in the city of Gouda, noticed the surprising influence and popularity of a strict and uncompromisingly orthodox imam among his young friends. Established wisdom holds that in order to be acceptable to the young, an imam needs to understand the European cultural environment and be aware of the moral and cognitive problems faced by second-generation immigrant youth. This imam, however, made no concessions to Dutch culture and Dutch mores or to the wishes of the mosque committee, nor did he make any specific attempt to reach out to the youth. He simply

spoke in stark black-and-white tones of right and wrong, of unchangeable truths, and of men's obligations to God. De Koning noticed that the young men respected and admired this imam for his consistency and his refusal to accommodate; they began frequenting the mosque more regularly because of him, and some of them, he discovered, turned to what he later realized was Salafism.[2]

Generalizing from similar observations, the French political scientist Olivier Roy has commented that many second-generation Muslim immigrants are critical of the religious practices of their parents' generation, which they consider overly tainted by Algerian (or Moroccan, Tunisian, etc.) culture. They search, Roy asserts, for an essential Islam purged of alien cultural influences – 'pure' Islam rather than some degenerate form such as 'Algerian Islam' or 'Turkish Islam'. And the closest thing to Islam without culture, according to Roy, is Salafism.[3] This is an interesting observation, and it is certainly the case that Salafis are highly critical of all local cultural practices that are not supported by a *hadith* or a verse in the Qur'an. In the self-perception of Salafis, they do not adhere to some local variety of Islam but to the only pure and unchanging version of the faith.

SALAFISM AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Some might say, however, that Salafism – and especially its Saudi variety, commonly called Wahhabism – reflects the culture of the Arabian peninsula, and that the claim of its universality is just another form of cultural imperialism. As more studies of contemporary Salafism appear, it is gradually becoming clear that there are in fact quite distinct regional differences between various groups or tendencies of the Salafi movement. This was argued, for instance, by Joas Wagemakers, who has pointed out that there are considerable differences in style and apparently even religious experience between Jordanian and Saudi Salafis, which he attributed to the different political cultures of those countries. Even among the most quietist, apolitical Salafis, this regional difference is conspicuous. Wagemakers discovered that the Jordanian Jihadi Salafi Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, to whose writings he devoted a path-breaking study, was so Saudi in style that he could become a major authority for Saudi radicals, while Jordanian militants found his work too abstruse and irrelevant to their struggle.[4]

The existence of such cultural differences in religious style, even in a movement that claims to reject cultural specificity, may help to explain why we find that in Western Europe several of the leading lights of the politically

oriented stream of Salafism are originally from Northern Lebanon or the neighbouring regions of Syria. As one of these leaders explained to Zoltan Pall (in an interview reported below), Salafis from the Gulf countries are used to operating in a tribal society, where tribal solidarity as well as hostility to rival tribal groups are facts of life. Lebanese Salafis have learned to operate in a much more urbanized, multicultural environment and are much less inclined to isolate themselves from non-Salafis and to perceive other believers, including Christians, as enemies. This, he claimed, makes it much easier for Lebanese Salafis to live and work in West European societies than for those from Gulf countries.

TYPOLOGIES OF SALAFISM

In the literature on Salafism, one often encounters a distinction between three types of Salafism. The distinction was first made by the American political scientist Quintan Wiktorowicz and has since become widely accepted by scholars and journalists.[5] Wiktorowicz spoke of three Salafi 'factions': 'purists', 'politicos', and 'jihadis'. The first constitute the largest group; they are 'primarily concerned with maintaining the purity of Islam as outlined in the Qur'an, Sunna, and consensus of the Companions', and they reject all forms of political engagement as unlawful innovation. Because of the rejection of political activity, some observers prefer to call them 'quietists' since this is what appears to distinguish them most sharply from the other two groups. The 'politicos' were influenced by the ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood and insist that in answering even the most strictly religious questions, the political context has to be taken into account. Wiktorowicz also perceives a generation conflict between them and the established 'purist' religious authorities. His chief examples of 'politico' Salafis are the Saudi preachers of the so-called *Sahwa* ('Awakening') movement, who criticized the Saudi regime when it invited American troops to defend the country after Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. The 'jihadi' faction emerged in the context of the war in Afghanistan, where Saudi Salafis were in intensive contact with the more radical wings of the Muslim Brotherhood and its violent offshoots, and where the idea of the obligation of violent *jihad* in order to establish 'pure' Islam gained prominence.

All three 'factions' of the Salafi movement are in agreement about matters of belief and the rejection of human desire or reason as a factor in understanding the immutable sources of Islam. Where they differ, Wiktorowicz claims, is in their interpretation of the context to which belief should be

applied. 'Jihadis' are not the only ones to endorse jihad; all Salafis agree (along with other Muslims) that in certain conditions jihad – understood as armed struggle – is a religious obligation. The jihadi Salafis, however, hold that jihad is not only obligatory against a non-Muslim aggressor or occupier of Muslim territory but against corrupt governments of Muslim countries or the West in general as well. This seems to suggest, as Wiktorowicz notices, an influence of the concept of *takfir* of the ruler (i.e., declaring rulers of Muslim countries apostates from Islam) developed by the Egyptian Muslim Brother Sayyid Qutb (executed in 1966). 'Jihadi' Salafis would thus appear to be just a more radical version of the 'politicos', influenced by more radical wings of the Muslim Brotherhood. However, the chief theoretician of jihadi Salafism, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi (whom Wiktorowicz mentions but does not study in detail), appears to have arrived at his concept of *takfir* and the obligation of jihad against corrupt rulers as an ethical rather than political duty by a rather different reasoning, which places him closer to the 'purist' Salafis.[6]

This tripartite typology corresponds with the existence of distinct groups in real life, but it does not help much to understand the nature of the relationship between the three 'factions' and in fact may obscure the attitude of the various Salafi currents towards political engagement. Al Qaeda and related groups (Wiktorowicz's chief examples of jihadi Salafis) have a history and a world view that are distinctly different from those of the Saudi preachers of the *Sahwa* movement (Wiktorowicz's 'politicos'), although Bin Laden has said friendly words about the latter. Wiktorowicz identifies as 'purists' the Saudi learned establishment and the late Nasir al-Din al-Albani. The latter, based in Jordan for much of his later life, was fiercely critical of more politically minded Salafis inspired by the Brotherhood, but he was himself the chief inspiration for an earlier movement that opposed the Saudi regime and in 1979 occupied the Great Mosque of Mecca.[7] As a third stream of 'purists', the late Yemeni scholar Muqbil bin Hadi al-Wadi`i and his followers may be mentioned. This school was the main source of inspiration for Indonesia's 'purist' Salafi militia, *Laskar Jihad*, which played a role in regional conflicts.[8] Thus, there are 'purist' Salafis who organized themselves into a militia and actively engaged in jihad, whereas the leading theoretician of jihadi Salafism, al-Maqdisi, is essentially a quietist.

It has been noted, among others by the Norwegian political scientist Thomas Hegghammer, that Wiktorowicz's typology appears based on a mix of religious and political criteria. The question has also been raised of whether jihadis are just a variety of Salafis or a distinct group altogether that has but little to do with the quietist mainstream among the Salafis.[9]

One useful contribution to the research on Salafis, which is presented in this report and is based on extensive interviews with numerous Salafi respondents, is Zoltan Pall's proposal for a slight modification of the typology, which enables one to understand the debates between the various groups of Salafis. He makes a distinction between the two main categories: the 'purists', who primarily focus on following the most authentic prescriptions concerning worship and social interaction as closely as possible and who consider obedience to the de facto ruler an obligation, and *harakis* or 'activists', who believe in political action as a means of carrying out God's will and who are not unconditionally loyal to the ruler. Within the 'purist' camp, he distinguishes between 'rejectionists', who forbid all forms of political engagement, and the 'politically oriented', who may be politically active (though only as far as permitted by the ruler) as a form of *da'wa*, or religious propaganda. He sees the 'activists' also further differentiated along an axis running from social and political reformism to violent jihad. The jihadis are a relatively small minority among the Salafis, and they have received much attention from specialists in security and terrorism studies. The strength of this report lies in the insights it offers into the various types and styles of Salafi political engagement and the debates between politically oriented purists and reformist *haraki*s.

NORTHERN LEBANON AS A LABORATORY OF SUNNI MUSLIM MOVEMENTS

The insights presented in this report are based on observations and interviews with numerous leaders and followers of Salafi groups, from the Gulf States to Western Europe, with a special focus on Northern Lebanon. The Sunni Muslim community of this small region co-exists there with politically stronger Shi'is and Greek Catholic and Maronite Christian neighbours. This community was long dominated by two distinct and rival religious movements – one of them a Sufi movement known as Ahbash, the other the Lebanese wing of the Muslim Brotherhood. The Salafi *da'wa*, as Zoltan Pall shows in this report, took a distinct form here, different from other parts of the Arab world, and it may be the specific conditions of this region that made North Lebanese Salafi preachers effective in Western Europe as well.

There exists no formal Salafi organization – formal organizations, after all, did not exist in the time of the Prophet, and many Salafis consider them as a reprehensible innovation in matters of religion. This raises the question of how the Salafi *da'wa* – the preaching of Salafi doctrine – was able to successfully compete with the strong and well-entrenched organizations

that were already in place. Pall traces how Salafi preachers gained control of mosques and spread their influence to diffuse audiences. It may be hard to say who, apart from the Salafi preachers, actually *is* a Salafi. There is no formal membership, and very few people would refer to themselves as Salafis anyway; the favourite self-appellation is just 'Muslim'. Many people who are not Salafis themselves nonetheless respect the Salafi preachers because of their knowledge of the authentic textual sources. People move into and out of study circles around Salafi preachers, where among other things they are confronted with scripture-based criticism of the existing Sufi and Islamist organizations. The impact of the Salafi *da'wa* moreover appears to have fluctuated with the overall political conjuncture of government religious policies and inter-community tension.

Pall found that though the Salafi preachers are generally local men, their activities are supported by donations from foundations based in Gulf states, two of which especially stand out: Kuwait's Jam'iyyat Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami and the Sheikh Eid Charity Organization from Qatar. Both foundations have been branded as 'political' by other Salafis, but they represent different types of politically oriented Salafism, the former 'purist' and the latter rather *haraki*. Northern Lebanon offers an interesting laboratory for observing how these different brands of Salafism, originating from a culturally different and more homogenous environment, interact with this more cosmopolitan and multicultural environment. This alone makes the experience of Northern Lebanon relevant for the West European context as well.

THE RESEARCH FOR THIS REPORT

Zoltan Pall was trained as an Arabist and political scientist and worked for several years as a journalist based in Damascus. He is currently a Ph.D. student at Utrecht University. Pall was already familiar with Northern Lebanon and especially its Sunni Muslim community before he began his fieldwork for this report, and he is fluent in the local version of Arabic. The research programme on transnational Islamic movements, funded by Forum in 2009-2010, enabled him to carry out further fieldwork in Lebanon and to trace the various lines of communication connecting Lebanese Salafis with the Gulf region on the one hand and Western Europe on the other.

Pall spent three months in Northern Lebanon and followed this up with shorter periods of fieldwork in Kuwait and Qatar as well as a series of interviews in Germany and the Netherlands. He interviewed sheikhs and preachers, supporters and opponents, followers and former followers of the various

Salafi tendencies; he listened to sermons and took part in study circles as a participant observer. His thorough acquaintance with the mindset of his Salafi respondents is clear on every page of this report.

A fortunate circumstance was the existence of a strong Dutch network of other researchers on Salafism who regularly met to discuss their work. This network originated in the now defunct International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM) and a joint research programme led by Professor Harald Motzki of Nijmegen's Radboud University and myself. The network consisted of Roel Meijer (political reformist Salafism, especially in Saudi Arabia), Joas Wagemakers (the jihadi Salafi theorist al-Maqdisi), Martijn de Koning (Salafism in the Netherlands), and Carmen Becker (Internet-based Salafi networks), and it was later expanded to include Din Wahid (Salafi madrasas in Indonesia) and Zoltan Pall (Lebanese Salafis). In 2007, Roel Meijer, then a research fellow at ISIM, organized a large international conference on Salafism at Radboud University, in which virtually all serious scholars of Salafism took part. Meijer's edited volume, *Global Salafism*, represents the state of the art, a baseline from which all research by the members of the network could build. Co-operation in this network has been highly stimulating for the participating researchers, and all of them have meanwhile produced work of high quality that represents significant advances in our understanding of Salafism.

INTRODUCTION

Salafism is one of the most dynamic and rapidly growing Islamic movements. It is impossible to understand contemporary Islam without taking it into account. The movement has reached almost every corner of the Muslim world, and its transnational networks span the globe.

Despite the importance of Salafism, academics have only recently begun to pay serious attention to the movement. While the body of literature on Salafism is growing, there are still many lacunae in our knowledge. The transnational dynamics of Salafism, the development of transnational networks and the way in which the movement finances itself are still under-researched. This study is intended as a contribution towards filling these gaps.

In my previous fieldwork in Northern Lebanon, I encountered an interesting manifestation of Salafism in the city of Tripoli and the surrounding area. I noticed that Salafi preachers have become increasingly influential among the Sunni population and are drawing followers away from mainstream Islamic movements such as the Muslim Brothers, al-Ahbash (a Sufi-oriented activist group) and the local Tripolitan Unification Movement. This led me to focus more on Salafism in this region.

Lebanese Salafis have not attracted serious academic attention in the past. Researchers have only published extensively on the jihadi Salafis who operate in the country.[1] Lebanese Salafi militants have come into the spotlight many times due to their terrorist attacks on and conflicts with the Lebanese army. The last such event occurred in the summer of 2007, when the Salafi militia Fatah al-Islam fought a three-month-long bloody battle with the army in the Nahr al-Barid Palestinian refugee camp near Tripoli. The wider Salafi community attract the media's attention only in relation to violent events, when the names of Salafi leaders are linked – incorrectly in most cases – to militant organizations. Serious academic publications on Lebanese Salafism do not yet exist, in spite of the growing importance of the Salafi *daʿwa* (preaching). I quickly discovered that the Lebanese situation would provide an excellent opportunity to better understand the dynamics of the Salafi movement worldwide.

In 2009, I had the chance to conduct three months of ethnographic fieldwork in Tripoli and the North, and the data collected during this period constitute the core of this report. I was able to monitor the transnational contacts and networks of my informants, and drew the conclusion that local Salafis form part of larger transnational networks that reach across several countries. Mapping these networks led me to make a one-month fieldwork trip to Kuwait and a shorter field trip to Qatar. Both countries are home to large Salafi charity organizations that generously support Lebanese Salafis. Salafis in Tripoli also have links with Europe.

In this study, I examine two ideologically distinct networks – the first belonging to the so-called "purist" stream, and the second to the "activist" one. Both networks are sponsored by transnational Islamic charities. The purists receive financial support from the Kuwait-based Revival of Islamic Heritage Society, the activists from the Sheikh Eid Charity Organization in Qatar. Since I did not contact jihadis during my fieldwork for this report, I mostly focus on those Salafis who practise *daʿwa* by peaceful means. Militants are mentioned only occasionally. I use social movement theories to provide a theoretical framework.

In the first chapter of the report, I introduce Salafism in general. I give a picture of the doctrines of the movement and its historical development. I also present a critique of the classification of the movement by other authors, and present my own method.

The second chapter is about the emergence and development of Salafism in Northern Lebanon, a process that I examine by analysing the broader social and political context.

In the third chapter, I employ my classification of Salafis in Lebanon by analysing the discourse of the different groups. I present their views on politics and their stance toward the Shiʿite community and Hizbullah.

The fourth chapter analyses the mobilization structures of Lebanese Salafis. I also investigate how they gain material and non-material resources, and I stress the importance of Islamic charities and patronage.

The last chapter is based on my fieldwork in Kuwait. I outline the development and transformation of what is probably the largest Salafi charity, the aforementioned Revival of Islamic Heritage Society. This chapter aims to further demonstrate the transnational nature of the movement and the interconnectedness of Salafi groups in different countries.

1

WHAT IS SALAFISM?

Despite the rapidly growing academic literature on Salafism, the term is still beset by a lack of clarity, even for those who are otherwise interested in Islam. I therefore consider it important to offer a short introduction to the movement at the outset. In the following chapter I will sketch the development, belief system and internal variety of the movement on the basis of the existing literature as well as my own observations.

Before beginning my analysis, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of the term itself and its importance in the Islamic context. The term Salafism is derived from the Arabic expression *al-Salaf al-Salih* (the righteous ancestors), which refers to the first three generations of Islam, namely the companions of the Prophet Muhammad (*sahaba*) and the first two generations of their followers. Salafis intend to purify the religion of foreign elements and to return to the original form of Islam, the understanding of the Prophet and the *sahaba*. The Salafis are not alone in emulating the pious predecessors; in fact, all Muslims regard them as their primary example, but there is no consensus as to how they understood and practised the religion. In the sense that they look up to *al-Salaf al-Salih*, all Muslims are Salafis. However, those who are called by this name in the contemporary period represent a stream of Islam that promotes a literal understanding of the Qur'an and the Sunna (the prophetic tradition: the collection of sayings, practices and habits of Muhammad, recorded and transmitted by men from generation to generation; one single saying or practice is a *hadith* [pl. *ahadith*], and leaves little place for human reasoning [*'aql*] and opinion [*ra'y*]). Salafis try to imitate the Prophet and his companions not only in their beliefs but also in their daily practices and habits.

Many academic studies associate Salafism with Saudi Arabia and the official form of religion in the kingdom, often called Wahhabism. These scholars' approach suggests that Salafism was originally a local practice of the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula, alien to other parts of the Islamic world, which spread at the global level only due to the financial means of the Saudi state. This near-exclusive focus on the role of Saudi Arabia neglects a long

theological debate in the history of Islam that began in the second century after the Hijra and is still continuing. In the early period of the Abbasid Caliphate, Sunnite religious scholars split into two factions. The cause of the schism was a divergence in how they viewed the relation of reasoning (*ʿaql*) to the sacred text (*nass*). The first group called themselves Muʿtazila and propagated that reasoning should take priority when interpreting the text. They frequently used metaphors when explaining the Qur'an and the Sunna. The second group, the Ahl al-Hadith (or traditionalists), was the absolute antithesis of the former. Led by the founder of one of the four Sunni *madhabs* (religious schools), they did not leave any place for *ʿaql* in the interpretation of the text and only accepted the strict, literal meaning. According to them, text could be proven only by text, and not by logic. Although the Muʿtazila mostly disappeared, their place has been taken by the Ashʿarites (derived from the name of their founder, Abu-l-Hasan al-Ashʿari), who try to find a balance between the *ʿaql* and the *nass*. In other words, they allow the use of *ʿaql* only in the framework of *shariʿa*. The traditionalist-Ashʿari debate is widely neglected in Western literature, and a separate study would be required to fully understand it.

Today, the Ashʿari school dominates Sunni Islam and is equated with orthodoxy. However, the proponents of the literalist interpretation never disappeared; followers of this stream of religious thinking have always been present in the history of Islam. Perhaps their most significant advocates were Ahmed ibn Taymiyya – a thirteenth-century scholar whose works are the main sources of inspiration for modern Salafis – and the eighteenth-century Yemeni scholar Muhammed al-Shawkani.[1]

The contemporary revival of the traditionalist trend is largely due to the movement inspired by Muhammad bin ʿAbd al-Wahhab, an eighteenth-century scholar from Najdi (a region in Central Arabia). He was a fervent reader of Ibn Taymiyya and aimed to purify Islam in the Peninsula from those elements that he labelled heretical and foreign. These were, in the first instance, the then-widespread Sufi (mystical) traditions and practices, such as visits to the graves of holy persons to request their mediation with God. Muhammad bin ʿAbd al-Wahhab wanted the people of Arabia to return to the strict interpretation of the religious texts that he had learned from the writings of Ibn Taymiyya and his student, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (1292-1350). In spreading his religious views, he found an ally in a local chieftain, Muhammad bin Saud. Muhammad bin ʿAbd al-Wahhab and his successors provided religious legitimacy for the expansionist ambitions of the Saudi clan. Later in the twentieth century, this alliance became the basis of the modern Saudi

Arabian state and, with this, the traditionalist school became the dominant religious interpretation in the kingdom. After the oil boom, when the Gulf States became hugely wealthy, Riyadh's monarchs began using Islam and its traditional interpretation to further their own imperial ambitions. By dominating religion, they aimed to become the dominant power in the Middle East and even in the whole Islamic world. To fulfil these ambitions, Saudi Arabia invested billions of dollars in building mosques and Islamic centres worldwide and training religious scholars (*ʿulama*) to propagate the traditionalist interpretation.[2] This proselytizing effort was greatly (but not exclusively) responsible for the revival of the traditionalist school. Its contemporary followers widely call themselves Salafis and label their call *al-Daʿwa al-Salafiyya* (Salafi preaching). This is also the term that is most commonly used in the academic literature that focuses on this movement.

It is important to note that contemporary Salafism has other important sources and cannot be associated exclusively with the teaching of Muhammad bin ʿAbd al-Wahhab. One of the most important of these is the Islamic reformism of the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, led by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad ʿAbduh and Rashid Rida in Egypt. Although their theology differed from that of contemporary Salafis, since the former propagated a rationalist approach to religious texts, Salafis did adopt one of their methods. This was the *ijtihad,* or the making of legal decisions by means of the independent interpretation of legal sources, a method that had been neglected by Sunni religious scholars for centuries.[3] Later in his life, one of the Islamic reformist figures, Rashid Rida (1865-1935), moved closer to Salafi thinking by relying more on the *hadith* and less on reasoning. Many contemporary scholars adopted Salafism by reading the *al-Manar* journal published by Rashid Rida in Cairo.

This brief historical introduction may suffice to show that Salafism is not identical to Wahhabism, since the concept itself is much older than the preaching of Muhammad bin ʿAbd al-Wahhab, and Salafis have maintained a continuous presence beyond the Arabian Peninsula. The adoption of Salafi doctrines by the Saudi state and their subsequent worldwide propagation due to the country's financial clout only revitalized a thousand-year-old concept. So, in my opinion, just as we cannot use the term "Leninism" to refer to the entire body of Communist ideology, "Wahhabism" is also an incorrect term to describe Salafism.

THE CORE TENETS OF THE SALAFI BELIEF SYSTEM

Salafi *ʿaqida* (creed) revolves around *tawhid,* the unity of God. Of course, this is the core concept of Islam, but unlike the Ashʿarites and the Shiʿites, Salafis reject any philosophical reasoning. Most modern Salafi writers divide *tawhid* into three basic components, a distinction that is based on the works of Muhammad bin ʿAbd al-Wahhab.[4]

The first part is that of *tawhid al-rububiyya* (oneness of Lordship). It means that God is the sole creator of the universe, he is omnipotent, and nothing is comparable to him. Safar al-Hawali, a prominent Salafi scholar, identifies this part of *tawhid* as identical to the unity of God's deeds (*tawhid al-afʿal*). He states that everything is the result of God's will and omnipotent nature, and that his deeds are not determined by material factors. In one of his writings, al-Hawali gives the Qur'anic example of the Jews (*banu Israʾil*) who did not believe that their victory over the Pharaoh was only due to God's mercy. Therefore, they had to wander for forty years in the desert while God fed them with "Manna" and "Salwa". After that, they recognized that God provides human beings with everything and were finally allowed to enter the Holy Land.[5]

The second part of *tawhid* is *tawhid al-uluhiyya* (oneness of Godship) or *tawhid al-ʿibada* (oneness of worship). It means that only God deserves any kind of worship, and that all religious practices must be directed toward God alone. Salafis strictly forbid any kind of seeking of mediation (*tawassul*) and aid (*istighatha*) from saints, something that is common practice almost everywhere else in the Islamic world. This is one of the reasons for their hostility toward Sufism. As al-Hawali writes, "if you believe that God is the provider of victory, then you should not ask it from somebody else."[6]

The third part is *tawhid al-asmaʿ wa-l-sifat* (oneness of the names and attributes). The Qur'an contains 99 names of God (such as *al-Ghaffar*, the forgiving; *al-Razzaq*, the provider; and so forth). The Book also names the attributes of God, such as his hands, his face, and so forth. These provide the basis for metaphorical explanations and use of reasoning. For example, Ashʿarites explain the mentioning of God's hands in the Qur'an as the expression of his power.[7] Salafis strictly reject this approach. Since these things are mentioned in the text, then they have to be accepted literally. However, they also reject anthropomorphism; Muslims have to accept that the human mind is not able to understand the substance of God, therefore the names and attributes must not be explained (*bila kayf*).

Salafis consider the preservation and defence of *tawhid* to be a Muslim's most important task. The opposite of the Oneness of God is *shirk* – that is,

associating other things with God (for instance *tawassul* and *istighatha* are considered to be *shirk*). Therefore, Salafis fight any innovations (*bidʿa*) that contradict the Qur'an and Sunna because *bidʿa* can lead to *shirk*. To give an example, praying more than five times a day is *bidʿa,* because the text mentions only five prayers. A Salafi scholar told me that wearing jeans is also *bidʿa* according to his understanding because by doing so, the Muslim associates himself with Western culture and customs that contradict Islam.[8]

To preserve *tawhid* and avoid *shirk,* Salafis cling to the absolute authority of the text, which they interpret literally, and also put great emphasis on the *hadith*. They do not accept the interpretation of the Qur'an by metaphorical means, but they think that if a certain *aya* is unclear, then the explanation can be found in the *hadith*; this, however, calls for a skilled scholar. This is why Salafis put great emphasis on *ʿilm al-hadith* (the science of *hadith*), which is basically the archaeology of the text to find answers to specific questions. *Hadith* scholars also examine the credibility of a *hadith* by analysing the chains of transmission. They are not allowed to use reasoning to decipher the meaning of the text, but they can explain the exact meaning using modern Arabic, since the wider public is not always able to understand the classical language.

As I mentioned above, Salafis adopted the concept of *ijtihad* to find a solution if they were unable to find an exact answer in the text. However, while Islamic reformists and the Shiʿites use reasoning while practising *ijtihad,* Salafis restrict themselves to finding analogies (*qiyas*) in the Qur'an and Sunna. For instance, they forbid the use of cannabis on the basis of the prohibition of alcohol. Although there is no word in the text about cannabis, like alcohol, it affects people's ability to make decisions.[9]

One of the most important features that distinguishes Salafism from other sects is *al-wala' wa-l-bara',* which can be translated as "loyalty and disavowal". This concept entered the traditionalist school via Ibn Taymiyya and was elaborated by Muhammad bin ʿAbd al-Wahhab and his successors.[10] *Al-wala' wa-l-bara'* divides the world into two separate spheres: one is the realm of Islam, the second is the realm of the *kuffar* (unbelievers), which is necessarily evil. Muslims should feel loyalty and a sense of brotherhood with those who belong to the first realm, while defending the purity of their religion from influences coming from the second. However, Salafis interpret the practice of this concept in different ways. Activist interpretations can even call upon Muslims to physically destroy that which is regarded as un-Islamic, while more quietist interpretations focus only on the avoidance of foreign elements that corrupt the purity of Islam.

SALAFI FACTIONS: THE PROBLEM OF CLASSIFICATION

Despite having a common creed that sets very strict boundaries on theological thinking, Salafism is far from monolithic. Although Salafis share the concept of *tawhid,* they differ on the methods of purifying Islam. Many of them focus only on proper religious practices; others follow a more activist path. The Saudi religious establishment, al-Qaeda, and a significant number of Kuwait's political reformers are members of the same social movement.

Quintan Wiktorowicz developed what has become a widely adopted classification of Salafis.[11] He distinguishes between different factions according to their stance toward the socio-political reality of the contemporary Muslim world. However, the rigidity of Wiktorowcz's method and his simplistic approach have been criticized. In the following paragraphs, I will describe Wiktorowicz's classification, the critique of his approach, and an alternative solution that was formulated by Thomas Hegghammer. Finally, I offer my own suggestions regarding a more practical classification that can capture the theological substance and dynamism of Salafism.

Wiktorowicz distinguishes between three Salafi factions: purists, politicos and jihadis. The purists believe "that the primary emphasis of the movement should be promoting the Salafi creed and combating deviant practices, just as the Prophet fought polytheism, human desire, and human reason. Until the religion is purified, any political action will likely lead to corruption and injustice because society does not yet understand the tenets of faith."[12] Purists commonly use an analogy from the Meccan period of the Prophet's life during which, according to the purists, he focused only on *daʿwa* and did not become involved in political affairs or wage *jihad*. At this time, Muslims formed a minority in Mecca and were not in a position to use force against the Quraysh elite.[13] Therefore, purists think that Muslims should return to the correct form of practising their religion before engaging in any kind of activism. As Wiktorowicz explains,

> Although purists also believe that the West intends to destroy Islam, they refuse armed struggle. Instead the purists transform this suspicion into an active ideological program to prevent any usage of Western values, behaviors, or systems of logic to discuss religion.[14]

The author also states that "this obsession with maintaining and propagating a pure understanding of Islam has produced a strong tendency toward isolationism. Any interaction with nonbelievers is viewed as an opportunity

for the nonbelievers to infect Muslims".[15] According to Wiktorowicz, purists refuse to participate in political organizations because they consider these to be an innovation that has been "derived from the Western model of party politics and democracy".[16] The participant's loyalty would be towards the party, and not God.

In Saudi Arabia in the 1980s and 1990s, the authority of the senior purist *ʿulama* was challenged by younger scholars, who "argued that they have a better understanding of contemporary issues and are therefore better situated to apply the Salafi creed to the modern context".[17] Wiktorowicz refers to members of this faction as "politicos" because they see the political realm as an organic part of Islam. As the author explains, for a long time the Salafi movement was unified and purist in orientation. Things began to change when large numbers of Egyptian Muslim Brothers found refuge in Saudi Arabia from persecution by the secular regime in their home country. These highly educated Islamists quickly became influential on university campuses, and their books became very popular. Since Muslim Brothers had a sophisticated understanding of politics due to their long history of political engagement, they had an impact on the thinking of many young Salafis. "They believed real protection [*of tawhid*] requires addressing political issues as well. Otherwise, the rulers could destroy *tawhid* and Islam."[18] The Muslim Brothers-influenced Salafi movement in Saudi Arabia became known as *al-Sahwa al-Islamiyya* (Islamic Awakening) or simply *Sahwa*. A schism between purists and politicos occurred when, during the 1991 Gulf War, the senior purist *ʿulama* legitimized the decision to invite US troops into the country. As Wiktorowicz explains, this "led many younger scholars to question whether the senior purists really understood the political world in which they lived".[19] Politicos launched debates about current affairs and criticized purists for limiting their focus exclusively to the details of religious practice.

According to Wiktorowicz, the split between purists and politicos led to the formation of the jihadi faction. Confrontation between the Saudi regime and politicos resulted in the latter's persecution. Leading figures in the politico movement ended up either in prison or in exile. Some of the young Salafis who were fighting in Afghanistan and other places were affected by the politicos' ideas. They were seeking the establishment of Islamic states by using violence. After Saudi Arabia's crackdown on the politicos, this group denounced the regime as subservient to the enemies of Islam, along with the purist *ʿulama* who legitimized it. As Wiktorowicz states,

> for the jihadis, the purists represent *ulama al-sulta* ('the scholars of power'). The term is laden with negative connotations, implying an insidious relationship with regimes and authority structures that undermines the independence and legitimacy of Islamic interpretation. It is typically surrounded by a barrage of other disparaging terms, such as 'palace lackeys,' 'the corrupt ulama,' and 'the ulama who flatter (those in power)'.[20]

In his analysis, Wiktorowicz refers to al-Qaeda as the main representative of the jihadi faction.

Thomas Hegghammer has criticized Wiktorowicz's classification, calling it "inconsistent" and arguing that it mixes "means and objectives".[21] For example, Hegghammer calls Salafism a theological concept that "highlights a distinction that is secondary in informing political behavior".[22] He offers an alternative classification that includes all of the Islamic movements and uses five rationales that "represent the most important reasons for which Islamists act".[23] These rationales are "state-oriented", "nation-oriented", "*umma*-oriented",[24] "morality-oriented", and "sectarian". The two manifestations of these rationales are non-violent and violent in form. Hegghammer includes all Islamist movements in his categorization, regardless of their theological background, arguing that "the term Salafi … says very little about the expected political behavior of actors labeled as such".[25] For instance, he puts the Muslim Brothers and the Saudi *Sahwa* in one category as non-violent manifestations of "state-oriented" Islamism. Its violent manifestations are, for example, the Algerian Groupe Islamique Armée (GIA) or the Egyptian Islamic Jihad.

I believe both classifications are incomplete. The first, elaborated by Wiktorowicz, is too rigid, sets too sharp boundaries between the factions, and somewhat neglects the core theological discourses that do, in fact, motivate the actions of Salafis. First, Wiktorowicz describes jihadis as violent offshoots of the politicos, although it is very difficult to define a "jihadi" or "politico" following Wiktorowicz's classification. Sometimes only the socio-political context can determine which strategy is chosen by a particular Salafi group. For example, during my fieldwork in Qatar, one of my informants, ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Nuʿaymi, the leader of the World Anti-Aggression Campaign, a transnational network of Islamists, claimed that he had the same ideological views as Osama bin Laden, whom he regarded as a freedom fighter against Western imperialism. At the same time, he defines himself as part of the *Sahwa* and intends to participate in the upcoming elections in Qatar. Most of those who are identified by the *Sahwa* generally support the Afghan and Iraqi jihad while refusing to engage in violence at home, either because they

do not see the regime as totally apostate, or because they think that the timing is inappropriate.

Second, Wiktorowicz suggests that the purists are not at all interested in politics and that they denounce participation in political organizations and focus only on religious practice. This view is at odds with actual practice, however, as many Salafis who hold the same religious views as the Saudi purists also actively participate in political life and form organizations. At the same time, they denounce the *Sahwa* and often ask for legitimation from the Saudi Hay'at Kibar al-ʿUlama (Body of Senior Religious Scholars). A good example of such practice is the Kuwaiti al-Tajammuʿ al-Salafi al-Islami (Salafi Islamic Gathering), the political arm of Jamaʿiyyat Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami (the Revival of Islamic Heritage Society), which I will analyse in a later chapter of this report.

Hegghammer's classification is no doubt very useful in analysing violent Islamist movements. However, it reflects a realist, structuralist approach toward social movement research and absolutely ignores the importance of theology in determining action. In my opinion, the theological background of a movement plays a crucial role in predicting its possible political behaviour, since the label of "Salafi" covers an entire worldview that does, in fact, have much to say about how a person perceives and reacts to certain political events. It is possible to write a whole article to prove this point, but here I limit myself to two examples.

First, Brynjar Lia, in one of his publications on the jihadi writer Abu Musʿab al-Suri, highlights how adopting a strict Salafi creed can cause divisions in militant movements.[26] According to al-Suri, the emphasis of Arab Salafi fighters on doctrinal purity impedes the creation of unity in the jihadi ranks.[27]

Second, if a social movement adopts the Salafi creed, its structure is always different from that of other Islamist movements. Almost without exception, Salafi groups lack sophisticated organizational strategies. Members are connected to each other through informal networks, and there is no clear, formal hierarchy between them. This phenomenon can also be derived from theology. According to most Salafis, operating in established organizational frameworks can lead to *bidʿa* and *taqlid*. They think that a person who subordinates himself to an established party hierarchy will gradually become more loyal to the leader than to the *tawhid*.[28]

To avoid the above-mentioned shortcomings, I suggest a mixed, two-level classification that is based on both theology and preferences. I think that the issue that divides Salafis most sharply is theological in nature and relates to

the concept of *hukm* (ruling) in Islam. The main debate revolves around the relationship of the ruled to the ruler (*hakim*). The members of the first faction, whom I will call "purist", are proponents of unconditional obedience to the ruler as long as he is not openly an apostate. In addition, they do not allow open criticism of the ruler, only secret advice *(nasiha sirriya*). The purists refer to the text to support their stance. They commonly quote one of the sayings of the Prophet: "Who sees disobedience of God from his *amir* [ruler] shall hate what this disobedience causes but shall not lift his hands against him."[29] When the purists forbid open criticism of the ruler, they usually cite the example of the first civil war in Islam.

> When *fitna* [civil war] occurred in the time of Caliph ʿUthman, some people asked Usama bin Zayd [one of the companions of the Prophet]: 'Don't you rebuke ʿUthman?' He answered: 'Rebuke him in front of the people? I rebuke him only in private but I do not open the doors of Hell in front of the people'.[30]

Purists use this to explain that even if it is true, open criticism can cause the people to rise up against the ruler and shake the order.

We can also identify different currents within the purist camp. The differences between them are not theological in nature but instead based on which strategy they regard as being more efficient to spread the *daʿwa*. I identify two main currents within the purist movement. The first group, which I call "purist-rejectionists", rejects any political participation, putting forward that in the political arena, Muslims can be affected by those who do not practise religion properly, or even by non-Muslims. They should only focus on proper daily religious practice. The followers of the Saudi scholar Rabiʿ al-Madkhali are a good example. Those whom I classify as belonging to the second current see political participation – if it is allowed by the ruler – as a tool of *daʿwa*, an excellent opportunity to spread the proper way of Islam and an appropriate platform to defend it. The above-mentioned Kuwaiti al-Tajammuʿ al-Salafi al-Islami is an example of this current. They strictly forbid any form of criticism of the Emir of Kuwait and are loyal to the government, but they otherwise actively participate in parliamentary debates. However, their political aims mainly concern social behaviour and the promotion of their understanding of Islam within Kuwait. For instance, partly due to their efforts, in most departments of the University of Kuwait, male and female students have to follow the lectures in separate rooms. I call this current "purist-politically oriented".

The second faction, which I call *harakis* (activists),[31] refuses to obey the ruler unconditionally. They approach religion from an all-encompassing

(*shumuli*) viewpoint. They are influenced by Sayyid Qutb's concept of *hakimiyya,* which considers any government that does not govern according to God's law to be illegitimate.[32] *Haraki* Salafis think that since Islam extends its rulings to every domain of life, politics and the political state of the *umma* (Islamic nation) should not be neglected. In their opinion, the stance of the purists serves the religion's enemies and colonialists. As many of my *haraki* informants explained, the unconditional obedience of the purists furthers the interests of Arab rulers, who are the "proconsuls" of the Western powers due to their total economic and military dependence on the West. They think that a ruler can only be legitimate if the ruled freely perform an oath of allegiance (*bayʿa*). Therefore, regimes that come to power via military coups or conquest are by definition illegitimate. They also defend their stance by referring to the case of the first four caliphs who followed the Prophet, all of whom were accepted by the majority of Muslims. Although there is no clear reference to this in the text, this process is in accordance with the consensus (*ijmaʿ*) of the *Sahaba*, the Companions of the Prophet.[33]

They also believe that it is permissible to openly criticize the ruler, and they refer to many cases in which the first four caliphs accepted open criticism. Salman al-ʿAwda, a prominent Saudi *haraki* scholar, mentions many examples in his book, *Why are we afraid of criticism?* [*limadha nakhaf al-naqd*]. One is that of how a man told the second caliph, ʿUmar bin al-Khattab, that "If we found deviance in your behavior then we would straighten it with our swords".[34] Al-ʿAwda explains that this does not mean that the people would literally use their swords but that they would criticize the caliph.

Harakis usually differ in the methods that they favour for achieving change and for reforming a Muslim world that is dominated by tyrannical regimes and dependency on foreign, non-Muslim powers. One should note here that this group is more divided than that of the purists. To clarify these divisions, I identify two main directions. The members of the first one, whom I call politicos, want to achieve change in the realm of politics via reform and by achieving wider political freedom in Muslim countries. They differ from politico-purists in the sense that while the latter use politics to achieve reforms that concern people's daily lives (such as banning alcohol in five-star hotels or enforcing sex segregation), the politicos' ambitions do not end there. They also focus on international relations and political freedom, which according to them is defined in the *shariʿa* or the accountability of political leaders. The Saudi *Sahwa* and the Kuwaiti Salafi movement (*al-Haraka al-Salafiyya*) are good examples of this stream.

The second current consists of jihadis who want to change reality by force. However, it is difficult to determine who is really a jihadi. The press and many academic studies have a tendency to call every Salafi who takes up weapons for a cause a "jihadi". However, there are ideological differences between them, and it is not possible to draw a complete picture of the movement in this introduction. Many Salafis, for example, support the resistance in Muslim territories occupied by foreign powers, such as Afghanistan and Iraq, but refuse to participate in military operations at home. Many of the Saudi *Sahwa* think this way, although nobody calls them jihadis. Others, like Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, intend to abolish autocratic Muslim governments first and then fight against the Western powers. I believe, however, that it is possible to distinguish a rather heterogenous group of Salafis who intend to abolish subservient Muslim governments and rid the *umma* of Western dominance by means of military force, and who regard political reforms as useless. In my classification, I call these jihadis; and due to lack of space, this explanation will have to suffice for now.

2

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SALAFISM IN TRIPOLI AND NORTHERN LEBANON

Salafism in Lebanon has taken a unique form, which differs in many aspects from Salafi groups in other Middle Eastern and European countries. Most of the academic literature on Salafism depicts it as an isolationist sect that attempts to build its own subculture, separate from mainstream society. Salafis try to avoid any social interaction with non-Muslims or non-Salafi Muslims, whom they consider heretics, in order to preserve the purity of their own religious beliefs and practices. Accounts of the movement in European societies depict it as being attractive to young people with immigrant backgrounds who have failed to integrate into the secular state. As they are not accepted by the majority of society, they are unwilling to identify themselves with belonging to a particular nation, but at the same time, they refuse to accept their parents' identity. This latter identity can be described with reference to their country of origin and, in many aspects, unorthodox practices of Islam (folk Islam). To escape this situation, these youths search for a new identity, and in many cases, Salafism is able to provide this. Belonging to the followers of the pure form of Islam elevates them from being a disadvantaged group to being part of the "saved sect" (*al-firqa al-najiyya*). As Adraoui puts it, "the appeal of Salafi Puritanism lies in its ability to provide a way of not opting out of the society but creating an alternative, superior community based on the unity of God (*Tawhid*)".[1] In other words, by following Salafism, the individual becomes part of the universal community of Muslims (*umma*) instead of being a (socially disenfranchised) part of a particular nation.

The attitude of Salafi groups in other Muslim countries is similar in many ways. Although the majority of these societies are Muslim, they mostly follow the Ashʿari creed, and Sufi practices are common among them. Salafis therefore want to isolate themselves from those who follow heretical practices. Like the European youths from immigrant backgrounds mentioned above, they perceive the adoption of Salafism and the abandonment of one's former lifestyle as a form of rebirth. In many cases, Salafis in the Middle East and Southeast Asia withdraw from mainstream society in order to avoid having any contact with heretical practices. According to the fieldwork results of

an Indonesian fellow researcher, Salafi communities in Indonesia buy entire living quarters to avoid the presence of non-Salafis in their immediate environment.[2]

According to my research, the manifestation of Salafism in Northern Lebanon, in Tripoli, and in the surrounding area has a different structure from that of the movement's other manifestations. Here, Salafism is not a grassroots movement with a large follower base that is isolated from the rest of the society. Rather, it can be described as networks of religiously educated individuals, sheikhs who control mosques, and charity endowments (*awqaf*). Although the movement's size is quite limited in numerical terms, it has a significant impact on the religiosity of the region's Sunni community. Most of the above-mentioned sheikhs are widely respected and have quite large, passive bases of followers who regularly attend the Friday prayers in their mosques, request *fatwa*s from them, and ask them to arbitrate in social disputes. At this point, we must address an important question – namely, how to classify this above-mentioned vanguard. Most of its members call themselves – and are called by their followers and acquaintances – "sheikh". This term is rather vague and does not answer our question; should those given this name belong to the group of religious scholars, or the *ʿulama* (sing. *ʿalim*) in Arabic, as I prefer to call them? Or shall we regard them as members of another category, such as *daʿiyya* or preachers?

In the context of Sunnism, the term *ʿulama* refers to Muslim religious scholars – the interpreters of the text and the transmitters and guardians of tradition.[3] Western scholarship usually regards *ʿulama* as those scholars who are either educated in Islamic institutions or possess *ijaza* (accreditation) from an acknowledged religious scholar.[4] In my opinion, however, this definition is rather problematic, at least in the context of Northern Lebanon's Sunni community. In the Tripoli area, I found the line between those who can be labelled *ʿulama* and those who are simply religious intellectuals to be rather blurred. I tried to approach this question by asking people who they considered to be *ʿalim* and also who fulfilled the function of *ʿulama* (that is, interpreting and transmitting the text and fulfilling certain social functions, such as arbitration in social conflicts).

In the pre-civil war era, it was possible to draw the boundaries of the *ʿulama* class. The religious scholars belonged to the official Sunni religious administration, organized under the auspices of Dar al-Ifta' (in common language, Dar al-Fatwa).[5] The top of this religious hierarchy was composed of those scholars who had been educated in prestigious religious institutions, such as al-Azhar in Cairo. The lower level was made up of informally edu-

cated sheikhs. The distribution of tasks between the high- and lower-class *ʿulama* is well described by Fuad I. Khuri in his study of Lebanese Muslim religious scholars:

> Not only do Sunni specialists differ in the scale of their training, but also in the details of the tasks they perform. The lower ranks perform less prestigious functions such as 'washing and burying the dead', 'reciting and chanting Qur'anic verses during funerals', 'calling for daily prayer', 'signalling Ramadan fasting schedule', and the like. These tasks assigned to local shaikhs, the lower ranks, could in Sunni Islam be performed likewise by the laity. By contrast, the higher ranks, the formally trained jurists, are responsible for the administration of Islamic law and share in the management of religious welfare including shari'a schools, colleges, orphanages, vocational training centers and homes for the aged. Along with the Power elite, they supervise the *awqaf* revenues and expenditures, allocate funds for building and maintaining mosques, opening or cleaning cemeteries.[6]

This religious elite had a relationship of mutual dependency with Lebanese Sunni patrons, including political patrons (*zuʿama*) and local notables (*wujaha'*). The lower class of the *ʿulama* did not receive any salary from Dar al-Fatwa and thus depended directly on the financial support of local communities such as villages and city quarters; they therefore needed the backing of the leaders of these communities. The high-ranking *ʿulama* filled political positions that depended on government appointments and therefore needed good relations with the *zuʿama*. The jurists who administered religious endowments (*awqaf*) also had a similar clientelistic relationship. The patrons mostly financed these endowments and also had a decisive voice in the committees that elected their administrations.[7] At the same time, the *ʿulama* provided the *zuʿama* with an effective tool for controlling the population and recruiting voters.

In contemporary Northern Lebanon (the only region on which I am able to comment, since I conducted the major part of my fieldwork there), the above-mentioned authority became contested. The main reason for this was the weakening of the role of Dar al-Fatwa and the disruption of traditional social structures and alliances. When, during the civil war, leftist and Arab nationalist militias gained prominence at the expense of the traditional *zuʿama*, the old alliance between the latter and the religious elite also largely disappeared. For a while, the *ʿulama* seemed to have become the political,

and not only the religious, representative of the Sunni community, but this newly gained influence was reversed in the wake of the assassination of the charismatic state mufti, Hasan Khalid, in 1987. His successor, Muhammad Rashid Qabbani, enjoys much less authority than his predecessor, and Dar a-Fatwa now suffers from a serious lack of funding.

Hundreds of independent Islamic charities offer their services to Sunni communities. Since they are not dependent, by any means, on the official Sunni religious body, they often represent very different agendas. Some of them are under the patronage of the *zuʿama*; others belong to various Islamic movements. According to one of my informants from al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya (Islamic Community, the Lebanese Muslim Brotherhood), in Lebanon there are almost 6,000 registered Islamic charity institutions. Many of them exist only on paper, but others are active organizations serving the aims of their political bosses, Muslim Brothers, Salafis, Sufi brotherhoods, or independent Islamists.[8]

The official Sunni establishment is also unable to gain absolute dominance in the domain of other religious services connected to ritual. For instance, Dar al-Fatwa controls only some of the mosques. According to data acquired from Dar al-Fatwa, the institution administers only 40 of Tripoli's 110 mosques. Another 40 are under the control of Salafi sheikhs, 30 belong to different movements, such as al-Ahbash (a Sufi-inspired movement), al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya and at-Tabligh.[9] In one of the most politically sensitive quarters of the city, in Bab al-Tabbanah, all seven mosques are under Salafi control, and Dar al-Fatwa does not have any influence in the region. In another region in the North, Wadi Khalid, which contains 23 villages and has 40,000 inhabitants, 15 out of 30 mosques belong to the Salafis, while the rest are controlled by Dar al-Fatwa and Sufi sheikhs. While I do not have exact statistics (and I think that it would be impossible to acquire quantitative data on this issue), one can guess that a very significant proportion – if not the majority – of the Sunni population of the North go to unofficial mosques and seek advice in relation to their daily religious practices from persons who do not belong to the official religious establishment.

In Lebanon, only those persons who hold a degree from an institution recognized by Dar al-Fatwa can be officially regarded as part of the *ʿulama*. However, the circle of those who in fact possess the authority of the *ʿulama*, practise their functions, and are regarded as *ʿulama* by the ordinary people is much wider. One incident I observed in Tripoli exemplifies this contradictory state of affairs. When I was walking in Sahat al-Najma (Star Square), one of the main squares of the old city, my eyes were drawn to a huge placard of

the recently deceased Islamist leader, Fathi Yakan, on the wall of one of the buildings. Under his photo was written "*ʿulama'una qadatuna*" (our *ʿulama* are our leaders). Yakan, a self-educated mechanic with no higher education, was the founder of the Lebanese Muslim Brotherhood and led the organization for three decades. He held an honorary doctoral degree in recognition of his contribution to the ideology of the transnational Muslim Brotherhood movement, in the form of more than 40 books. However, he never studied at any Islamic educational institution, and he himself used the title of *daʿi* (preacher) and never called himself sheikh or *ʿalim*. This inspired me to find out whether the above-mentioned sentence, "*ʿulama'una qadatuna*", honoured Yakan with the title of *ʿalim* due to his knowledge (the Arabic word *ʿalim* also means knowledgeable but is mostly used to refer to religious scholars), or whether people regarded him as part of the *ʿulama* class. When I asked the people who had hung the placard, they responded that Yakan is indeed one of the great *ʿulama* of Tripoli (*min kibar ʿulama Tarablus*). Another inhabitant of Tripoli told me that the city had provided the *umma* with two great *ʿulama*, Muhammed Rashid Rida and Fathi Yakan. In fact, Yakan fulfilled the task that had originally been designated to the religious scholars of Dar al-Fatwa: for instance he issued *fatawa*s (sing. *fatwa*), or legal opinions.

Whereas Yakan, being a Muslim Brother, tended to consider himself an Islamic intellectual rather than one of the *ʿulama*, in the case of the Salafis, this is different. Many of them, even when they have no institutionalized Islamic education, refer to themselves as *ʿulama*. Others have degrees from Lebanese Salafi *maʿahid sharaʿiyya* (*shariʿa* schools; sing. *Maʿhad sharaʿi*) that are not recognized by Dar al-Fatwa. Some Salafis gained their education in mosque study circles or in informal ways from one of the sheikhs. They even have *ijaza* (accreditation) that they have achieved a certain level in religious sciences, but this is not recognized by Dar al-Fatwa (*ijazas* given by Dar al-Fatwa sheikhs are recognized, but these only entitle their holder to fulfil basic ritual functions such as washing the dead).

Moreover, within Salafi circles, the status of some sheikhs is not recognized. One of my informants, a young woman who now owns a religious bookshop in the Abu Samra district, complained that "Now everybody is a sheikh who has read some books and memorized some *ahadith*. It is increasingly true if they have some friends in the Gulf and are able to support some poor people and buy their constituency [*byishtari jamaʿatu*]".[10] These individuals are regarded by their constituencies or clients as *ʿulama*, but other highly educated Salafis put the word "*akh*" (brother), and not "sheikh", before

their names. At the same time, I met some self-educated Salafis who were highly knowledgeable. One such self-educated *ʿulama* was Sheikh Abu Saʿd, whom I interviewed several times during my fieldwork in Tripoli. He was originally an engineer with a Bachelor's degree but currently runs an Internet café in the Abu Samra district. At his café, he also sells religious books and cassettes, ranging from the purist Egyptian preacher Mohammed Hassan through to the *haraki* Salman al-ʿAwda and jihadi themes. He is also the preacher of the Mustafa mosque in the same city district and teaches in informal study groups (*halaqa*) in the Rahma mosque. He joined the Salafis when the *daʿwa* became strong at the end of the 1980s and is now an active member of Jamaʿiyyat al-Hidaya wa-l-Ihsan, a *haraki* organization that I will discuss further below. Sheikh Abu Saʿd, now in his forties, reached a quite high level of *ʿilm* (religious knowledge) and therefore became a respected member of his city quarter. He is often invited to mediate in disputes between families. When I was in Tripoli at the end of 2009, he was working to resolve a shooting incident and to avert more serious conflict between two families in Abu Samra. A young man had injured another with a gun after a traffic-related dispute. Along with some sheikhs from al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya,[11] Sheikh Abu Saʿad intervened to forbid revenge and possible killing. The sheikhs organized meetings with the *wujaha'* of both families, then agreed on a certain amount of blood money. The sheikhs also managed to extract the price of the medical treatment for the injured person, thereby resolving the issue peacefully. Sheikh Abu Saʿd told me that he often mediates in conflicts between husbands and wives. In such issues, the *ʿulama* usually get involved when the woman flees her house and returns to her parents. Such cases are no longer private matters between two persons, but involve two families.

Sheikh Abu Saʿd acquired his knowledge by participating in informal study circles at Tripoli's mosques. He took lessons from traditional sheikhs representing the dominant *Shafaʿi madhab* in the area, from the Muslim Brothers, and later from the Salafis, whose teaching came to attract him the most.

In short, Salafis mostly constitute an informal *ʿulama* class that has not yet become integrated into the official religious body of Lebanon's Sunni community. The Salafi elite graduated from Medina University in Saudi Arabia or from the Shariʿa Department of Kuwait University. Others hold degrees from Lebanese Salafi educational institutions that are not recognized by Dar al-Fatwa. Many of them, however, have not participated in any kind of formal religious education, and have acquired knowledge in an informal way. While in pre-civil-war Lebanon those informally educated sheikhs received

a kind of recognition from Dar al-Fatwa, this is no longer the case, meaning that their authority is even contested within the Salafi community.

However, most of the followers of the Salafi sheikhs do not adopt the Salafi *manhaj* in its entirety. Many of them listen to music and smoke cigarettes, practices that are considered illicit; the majority do not obey Islamic dress codes and do not grow beards. Although the Sunni population of the North is considered the most conservative in Lebanon, it is still not comparable to other parts of the Middle East. For hundreds of years, Tripoli, as a distinguished port city, played a transit role between East and West. Here, Islam seems to be compatible with a Western lifestyle. Wearing fashionable jeans is more common than donning Islamic robes, even among those who try to perform all of their prayers in the mosque. One of the Salafi sheikhs who counts himself among the *haraki* explained to me that:

> the *daʿwa* has certain stages and it is in the very beginning in Tripoli and the North. You cannot begin here with an Islamic state; it is not Afghanistan. We are glad if we can lead back people to practise religion, convince them not to visit the Mino street [a street known for its numerous pubs and bars in Tripoli's *Mina'* district] and follow the right *ʿaqida* instead of Sufi heresies and the rationalism [*ʿaql*] of the philosophers. The Prophet began in Mecca with minor things; he gained a bulk of really committed followers in Medina. He was the most perfect of Humankind and even for him it took more than a decade of his lifetime, so we have to be patient.[12]

Salafi sheikhs tend to stress two important aims that have to be achieved before the Sunni population of the North can truly be converted to the correct way of practising the religion. The first is uprooting Sufism; the second is forbidding what they call the "Shiʿa expansion" (*at-tamaddud al-shiʿi*). In a following section, I will outline the Salafi struggle against Sufism in the Tripoli region and also the struggle against the perceived "Shiʿite threat".

When I interviewed ordinary people about why they prefer to visit Salafi mosques and ask the opinion of Salafi sheikhs in religious matters, they commonly responded with two arguments. First, they emphasized the "exactness" of Salafis when they formulate an opinion. ʿAli, a law student at the Tripoli branch of the Lebanese University, originally from Wadi Khalid, told me that when he asks a Salafi sheikh about a certain issue, "he always responds by quoting the Qur'an or the Prophet and has clear references to the text. The Ashʿari sheikhs of Dar al-Fatwa respond that 'I think' [*ana aʿtaqid*], while the Salafis respond 'the Prophet said' [*qal al-Rasul*]".[13] The other argu-

ment is that although Salafis are close to the people, they are surrounded by a kind of Islamic climate (*jaw Islami*). People admire them because of their strict adherence to Islamic moral and behavioural codes, even if they themselves do not follow them by doing these things themselves.

Besides the large passive follower base, there is a core of committed Salafis who are mostly young or middle-aged people. They sometimes constitute a sheikh's inner circle, but many of them also visit a number of different sheikhs, and their ideological stance within Salafism is often a changing one. They are frequently recruited by jihadi cells, and I will discuss them further in a later section.

Although the shape of the North Lebanese Salafi movement is somewhat different from that which can be found in other Arab and Western countries, it is not monolithic. Similar factions can also be found, like anywhere else. According to my observations, it is possible to apply the classification described in the previous chapter to the Lebanese Salafis. The purist and the *haraki* streams are clearly distinguishable in the Tripoli region. The two most powerful networks belong to the politico-purist and the politico streams. The former is represented by Waqf al-Turath al-Islami (the Islamic Heritage Endowment), which can be considered a local branch of the Kuwaiti Jamaʿiyyat Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami (the Islamic Heritage Society). The latter's most visible organization is the above-mentioned Jamaʿiyyat al-Hidaya wa-l-Ihsan (Society of Guidance and Almsgiving). Many *haraki* Salafis benefit from Mu'assasat al-Sheikh ʿAid al-Khairiyya (the Sheikh Eid Charity Organization), along with other *haraki* organizations and wealthy individuals. In addition to these two main streams, I met and interviewed purist-rejectionist Salafis. Jihadi groups are also active in the country, and some of them are quite powerful, but they lie beyond the scope of this study. In the following section, I will explain how these above-mentioned North Lebanese factions developed as a result of the local and transnational contexts, and the kinds of mobilization structures that they employ. The analysis is conducted using perspectives from social movement theory.

SALAFISM AS A SOCIAL MOVEMENT

According to Diani's definition, a "social movement is a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity".[14] The presence of a shared identity and a common goal, as implied

in the above definition, is crucial in the emergence and persistence of a social movement. Regarding Salafis, the shared collective identity is belonging to the true, pure form of Islam, sharing a belief in the Salafi creed (as described above), and practising the correct ritual that – as they believe – was followed by the Prophet himself.[15] Every Salafi shares a common aim, which is purifying Islam from foreign elements and innovations and leading Muslims back to the pure religion that was practised by the Prophet and the first three generations of Islam (this is true even if the methods of Salafis differ from those I described above). From this, it is clear that Salafism cannot be described using traditional forms of social movement theory that have been developed for movements in Western European and American contexts, which have clear political aims. The aim of Salafism is to change a person's religious beliefs and thereby their identity. Salafism is more focused on meaning, and even if Salafis engage in political action, it serves the latter goal. In this light, we can classify Salafism as a "new social movement".

Price, Nonini, and Tree have elaborated a useful method that is applicable to Salafism.[16] They distinguish a category of new social movements, which they call "grounded utopian movements". The authors criticize new social movement (NSM) theory on the grounds that it is too narrow in scale and only considers movements in post-industrial Western European and American contexts; that is, the theory considers such movements to be new and posits that their emergence is a direct response to particular developments in the modern age. Price, Nonini, and Tree, however, argue that such movements have always existed and not only in Western contexts, and they call them grounded utopian movements (GUM). As they put it, "GUMs, unlike other social movements, do not seek recognition either from capitalist institutions or modern nation states, but are instead grounded in visions of alternative 'ideal places' (utopias), and set out to establish alternative ways of living which their members find more just and satisfying than at present".[17] One of the most important characteristics of these movements is that they are messianic – that they "seek to restore or create alternative realities distinct from existing states and markets".[18] They are not usually formally organized, and they lack clear hierarchical structures, based instead on informal networks. Participants may not even perceive themselves to be members of a movement.

These above-mentioned features apply to Salafism. As explained above, Salafis intend to create the pure, ideal Islamic society as it was thought to exist at the dawn of Islam. They strongly believe that God has promised them success before the Last Day (*yawm al-qiyama*). One of my informants,

Sheikh Khalid, a middle-aged Salafi sheikh from the al-Dinniyeh region, north-east of Tripoli, told me that he believes that this time is close and that in a short while, this ideal Islamic society will come true. In his argument, he referred to a *hadith* from the Prophet: "From the signs of the Hour is that you see shepherds as leaders of people, and you see that the barefoot, naked shepherds of the sheep are competing with each other in the towers, and the *Umma* will give birth to its male and female ruler".[19] Sheikh Khalid interpreted this *hadith* as predicting that as the world nears its end, the Arabs of the Gulf, who always lived as Bedouins and shepherds, will build skyscrapers and compete with each other with their wealth. He thinks that the *hadith* refers in particular to the competition between three countries – Kuwait, the Emirates, and Qatar – to be the centre of the Gulf. In his opinion, these are signs that the fulfilment of God's promise is close, that the *daʿwa* activity of Salafis will not be wasted, and that they should therefore work even more intensively.

Salafis are not usually organized, and they are bound by informal ties. This means that we cannot observe a clear hierarchical structure, an issue that I will discuss later. They also stress that they do not belong to a movement (*haraka*); they are only the holders of the eternal truth in a world in which Islam is infected by heretical thoughts and Muslims follow the practices of the unbelievers. As one of the leading Lebanese Salafis explained to me: "I am a Muslim who believes that he follows the way of the Prophet, and it is natural that my relations are cordial with those who do the same."[20]

In the following paragraphs, I will examine how Salafism as a GUM emerged in Northern Lebanon and developed its mobilization structures in the light of the local and transnational contexts. In order to do this, I will employ opportunity structures theory in my analysis.

Political opportunity structure theory is one of the dominant fields in social movement research, but it is also one of the most debated and contested. Since the beginning of the 1980s, social movement theorists have recognized that changes in political and social structures facilitate or hinder the emergence and development of social movements. In Tarrow's words, political opportunity structures are "consistent – but not necessarily formal, permanent, or national – signals to social or political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements".[21] According to the dominant view, political opportunity structures may consist of institutional changes, social transformations, changing alliances, or conflicts – in short, those factors that can provide a movement with resources to mobilize and help it to oppose external constraints.[22]

However, there has been serious criticism of the political opportunity structures theory. As Gamson and Meyer write,

> The concept of political opportunity structure is in trouble, in danger of becoming a sponge that soaks up virtually every aspect of the social movement environment – political institutions and culture, crises of various sorts, political alliances, and policy shifts … It threatens to become an all encompassing fudge factor for all the conditions and circumstances that form the context for collective action. Used to explain so much, it may ultimately explain nothing at all.[23]

In order to avoid this conceptual overstretch, I will use a two-part solution. First, it is necessary to show how specific changes in the external environment provide a social movement with specific opportunities.[24] Second, I believe it is necessary to develop a meaningful classification of different types of political opportunities. We have to distinguish between institutional and cultural political opportunities, classifying them as stable or volatile. A stable institutional opportunity can be, for instance, the strength of state institutions, while changes in policy alliances can be labelled as volatile. A society's dominant belief system can be regarded as a stable cultural opportunity, while current public discourses can be seen as volatile. In addition, in my analysis, I will classify political opportunities according to the territorial extent that affects social movements – that is, local or transnational opportunities. In the following section, I will briefly describe how Salafism emerged in Northern Lebanon and then examine the opportunities that led it to become one of the most significant Sunni movements.

Salafis usually claim that their movement is the oldest Islamic movement in Lebanon. Most of them consider the founder of Salafism in the country to be Salim al-Shahhal (1922-2008), a self-educated intellectual from the Dinniyeh region. His son, Abu Bakr al-Shahhal, told me that his father was originally influenced by the reformist Salafism of Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865-1935), who was born in the village of Qalamun, near Tripoli, but spent most of his life in Egypt. At the end of the 1940s, Al-Shahhal was influenced by the journal *al-Manar*, which had been founded by Rida. One should note here that Rida originally belonged to the so-called "reformist Salafi" stream that emerged in the late nineteenth century in Egypt and then became influential in most Middle Eastern countries. This form of Salafism also stressed the need to return to the practice of the Pious Ancestors, condemning the rigidity of the four *madhahib* and rejecting *taqlid*; it approached the text by

using logic rather than literal interpretation. Later in his life, however, Rida adopted a more literalist approach and gave more importance to the *hadith* than his ancestors had done, such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani or Muhammad ʿAbduh.[25] Salim al-Shahhal then became a member of the network of the famous Salafi scholar, Nasir al-Din al-Albani. Through him, he was able to reach many Salafi scholars in Saudi Arabia and gain financial support for his *daʿwa* activity. Although it should be added here that according to his relatives and contemporaries, Sheikh Salim did not adopt the contemporary meaning of Salafi *manhaj,* and he was not conscious of belonging to the Salafi *daʿwa*. He even refused to use the word "Salafi". Nor did he hold the Manichean world view of contemporary Salafis who see the world through the lens of a conflict between the true religion and heresy or unbelief. Rather, he considered himself to be one of the religious intellectuals of Tripoli, who was respected even by the city's political leaders. It is well known that he was frequently invited to advise the leaders of the Karami clan, the most powerful of Tripoli's *zuʿama* prior to the civil war. Sheikh ʿAbd al-Ghani, one of the Palestinian sheikhs in the Nahr al-Barid camp in the outskirts of Tripoli, recalled that in the 1960s, al-Shahhal was the electoral candidate for Hizb al-Tahrir, an Islamist movement that intends to re-establish the Caliphate. He also recounted that al-Shahhal would wear traditional *Shami* dress (referring to Greater Syria) rather than Salafi garb. "Salim al-Shahhal with another Sheikh, ʿUthman al-Safi, used to stalk the streets of Tripoli wearing turbans, trousers and light shirts with two pistols in their belts. If they observed that somebody's behavior was un-Islamic, they tried to convince him to change. They regarded this as part of *hisba* [moral policing]."[26] However, those I spoke to claimed that they never had heard the concept of *al-wala' wa-l-bara'* from al-Shahhal.

In the early 1950s, Sheikh Salim gathered some of the pious youths of the city around him and called the group *Muslimun* (Muslims). This group became the nucleus for Islamic movements in the Sunni community. Among the disciples of al-Shahhal in al-Jamaʿa were Fathi Yakan, the founder and first leader of the Lebanese branch of the Muslim Brothers, and Saʿid Shaʿban, the leader of Harakat at-Tawhid al-Islami (the Islamic Unification Movement), which ruled Tripoli for two years at the beginning of the 1980s. Many of the main figures of the Salafi *daʿwa* were also socialized in the group established by Salim al-Shahhal.

In order to understand how Salafism developed from this relatively small group into a prominent Islamic movement in Lebanon's Sunni community, I will analyse the internal and external context, aided by the concept of

opportunity structures. Before analysing specific opportunities such as the Shiʿa revival or the failure of political Islamism in Lebanon, we first need to describe the broader societal context that directly or indirectly led to those specific opportunities.

Unlike other Arab countries, Lebanon has not seen the emergence of a strong state and a repressive political system capable of controlling the religious realm. The reason for this is that the Lebanese state and society are built on a fragile balance between the four main religious communities: the Maronite Catholics, Sunni Muslims, Shiʿite Muslims and Druzes, an esoteric, monotheistic community that emerged from Ismaili Shiʿism in the eleventh century. Between the end of the French Mandate in 1946 and the outbreak of the civil war in 1975, Lebanon's political and social institutions guaranteed the dominance of the Maronite community, with the Sunni community commanding a significant share of the power. The Shiʿites, however, were largely marginalized, although their numbers nearly matched those of the Sunnis. This sectarian division of power was codified in the legal system from the beginning. Before the civil war, Christians and Muslims (the Druzes are legally counted as Muslims) were represented in parliament at a ratio of 6:5. The president of the republic is always Maronite, the prime minister is always Sunni, and the speaker of the house is always Shiʿite. The Druzes were given influential ministerial positions. Prior to the Ta'if agreement that ended the 15-year civil war, the president had executive power, while the prime minister and the speaker possessed fewer prerogatives and were mainly subordinate to the president. Sectarian divisions were also reflected in almost all social institutions, and jobs and university positions were distributed according to a similar sectarian quota.

As mentioned above, the religious domain of the Sunni community was dominated by the *ʿulama*, who belonged to Dar al-Fatwa, which in turn was mostly subservient to powerful Sunni political masters. Before the Lebanese civil war, Islamist movements were relatively weak, and the only segments that were able to escape from the overwhelming authority of the official religious establishment were the Sufi brotherhoods.

This system was radically disrupted by the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war in 1975. The main cause of the conflict was the tension between the Maronites and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), which had established itself in the country after its displacement from Jordan in 1970. The collapse of the Lebanese state and social system led to two important opportunity changes that played an important role in the development of Salafism in the North.

The first such opportunity change was the Shiʿite revival and the emergence of Hizbullah. Prior to the civil war, Lebanon's Shiʿites constituted the most socially underdeveloped and impoverished community in the country. The majority of Shiʿites were under the patronage of their powerful, traditional *zuʿama*. Most of the population worked in the agricultural sector or as unskilled workers in cities such as Beirut or Sidon. Their middle class was thin compared with that of the Christians or the Sunnis. This situation, however, began to change after the civil war broke out. After the collapse of the state institutions, the Shiʿite *zuʿama* lost almost all of their power. Shiʿites first joined leftist movements such as the Lebanese Communist Party or various Palestinian factions. From the beginning of the 1980s, their own sectarian militia – *afwaj al-muqawama al-islamiyya* (the Battalions of the Lebanese Resistance, or AMAL) – became prominent. After the 1982 Israeli invasion, the ideology of the 1979 Iranian Revolution became increasingly popular. This was partly due to AMAL's inefficiency in dealing with the occupiers and defending its own community from Israeli raids and arrests. Groups of enthusiastic Shiʿite youth adopted Khomeinism and began launching attacks against the Israeli army. These cells were then organized into a single institutional framework by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, which had gained a foothold in the Beqaʿ valley in Eastern Lebanon. This organization announced itself in February 1985 as Hizbullah (Party of God). Due to Hizbullah's military activities and its use of suicide bombers in particular, Israel withdrew its army in the first half of 1985 from most of the territories it had occupied three years before. Until the end of the civil war, Hizbullah successfully established itself in the Shiʿite community by building charity institutions and in some areas of the country fulfilling the tasks of the state, which was non-existent at that time.

After the civil war, Hizbullah successfully established itself as a political party. From the 1992 elections onwards, it became a dominant force in the Shiʿite community, along with AMAL. While the majority of Sunnis initially supported Hizbullah's resistance activities, fears subsequently arose that Hizbullah's aim was not only to defend the country from the Jewish state but also to establish Shiʿite dominance and an Islamic state in Lebanon. Therefore, many Sunni intellectuals and politicians as well as ordinary citizens began to perceive Hizbullah as a threat rather than an asset for the country and non-Shiʿite Muslims. Salafi preachers successfully presented themselves as the vanguard against the "Shiʿite plot" and the "import of Khomeinism".

Sunni hostility toward Hizbullah increased significantly after the assassination of the former prime minister, Rafiq al-Hariri, and the withdrawal of the Syrian army after a 29-year presence in the country in 2005. Between

1992 and 2005, Hizbullah made do with holding one of the largest parliamentary blocks in the country, but the organization did not participate in government. The reason for this was that it enjoyed enough political protection from Syria, which effectively controlled the extremely fragmented political mosaic of Lebanon. Therefore, Hizbullah was able to maintain an image of itself as a pan-Islamic and national resistance organization that transcended sectarian divisions. However, this situation changed when Syrian protection was withdrawn and pro-Western, anti-Syrian forces gained a majority in the cabinet after the 2005 elections. They demanded the implementation of UN Resolution 1559 and the disarming of Hizbullah. The Shiʿite movement therefore sent its own representatives to the government to create political cover for its armed wing. By this point, however, it had become part of the sectarian struggle, and as a member of the government, Hizbullah had to return to its own community, the Shiʿites. Gradually, the image of the party changed from one of national resistance to that of a sectarian militia that wants to enforce its dominance at the expense of other communities. Hizbullah has been framed by the media and even by the *ʿulama* of Dar al-Fatwa as a part of a regional struggle between the Sunnites and Shiʿites, and as the Lebanese agent of Iran, an imperial state that wants to rule the Middle East and eradicate Sunnism. In such an environment, the rhetoric of Salafism was able to attract numerous followers. People in the North felt that sheikhs were telling the truth when they described the situation as being a direct result of the spread of heresy and the distortion of the pure religion.

Salafis have also been able to benefit from a further factor. After the Syrian withdrawal, Saudi Arabia strongly supported the al-Mustaqbal (Future) movement in political conflicts, which represented the majority of Sunni. The government in Riyadh was regarded as the flag-bearer of regional Sunni resistance against Iranian aspirations. During my fieldwork, for example, I observed that taxi drivers had put the Saudi flag on their cars. Gigantic pictures of King ʿAbdullah are fixed to the walls of Tripoli's houses. Salafi preachers are often associated with Saudi Arabia and are even regarded as the country's agents (which is often true, since many of them receive material support from the kingdom). In a later section, I will discuss the Salafi rhetoric on Shiʿism and Hizbullah.

The second major opportunity change was the transformation of religious authority in Tripoli. As I mentioned above, at the beginning of the civil war, the alliance between the official religious institutions and their political patrons collapsed. Although Dar al-Fatwa was able to retain and even increase its prominence for a time as not only the religious but also the politi-

cal representative of the Sunnis, subsequently, the authority of the traditional establishment in Tripoli largely declined. This chapter in Lebanese history is largely unwritten, especially with regard to the Northern regions. As a result, I had to rely on personal interviews with people who had lived through the events of the 15-year conflict and experienced the changes in the city's religious life. Sheikh ʿAli Taha, the imam of the Abu Bakr al-Siddiq mosque, recalled that "during the 1970s, the Communists and the Qawmiyyin [a reference to the Syrian Social Nationalist Party] were able to draw the youth away from Islam. Only the old used to pray, and in some regions the mosques were absolutely empty".[27] However, at the beginning of the 1980s, the dominance of the Left ended, partly as a result of the rise of Islamism in the region. The success of the Iranian Revolution gave credibility to local Islamists' arguments about the possibility of an Islamic state in the region. Local Islamist movements in Tripoli successfully recruited young people in the city's quarters. Many of these had seceded from the Left due to its failures in fighting Israel and the Maronite establishment.[28] These Islamist factions then merged into one movement – the Islamic Unification Movement (*Harkat at-Tawhid al-Islami*, or IUM) – under the leadership of the charismatic Sheikh Saʿid Shaʿban. In 1984, the movement was able to take over the city with the material support of Yasir Arafat's Fatah and the Iranian Islamic Republic. Saʿid Shaʿban announced the establishment of an Islamic emirate in the North. The Islamist mini-state was short lived, however, because the Syrian army managed to re-take Tripoli from the IUM in 1985. After its military defeat, the movement lost popular support. The main reasons for this were internal schisms, the terror practised by the IUM during its one-year reign, and the lack of a unified ideological direction.

The vacuum left by the IUM was partly filled by other Islamic movements, including al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya, al-Ahbash, and the Salafis. The situation was particularly favourable to the latter, since the local opportunity described above coincided with a transnational change of opportunity: the financing of the Salafi *daʿwa* by Saudi Arabia. The financial power of the Gulf countries increased dramatically after the rapid rise in the oil price following the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. The kingdom began financing the publication of Salafi literature, building mosques, religious educational institutions and charities in order to counter the transnational impact of the 1979 Iranian Revolution.[29] At the same time, when the prestigious al-Azhar University restricted its scholarships for foreign students due to persistent rumours surrounding Sadat's change of policy, the Islamic University of Medina opened its doors. Therefore, several Lebanese students went to Saudi Arabia to pursue their

religious studies. Many of them adopted the Salafi creed and began their *daʿwa* after returning to Lebanon in the second half of the 1980s. Among them were Sheikh Salim al-Shahhal's three sons, who after returning to Tripoli began building institutions and spreading the Salafi understanding of Islam. Sheikh Hilal Turkomani, a popular Salafi preacher in the town of Miryata (10 km from Tripoli), remembers how he joined Salafism at the beginning of the *daʿwa* in Lebanon:

> Some Salafi sheikhs after the fall of the ium began gathering young people around themselves. One of them was Usama Qasas. We were 40 young people and Sheikh Usama was our master until his murder by the Ahbash. Then around 1990, Daʿi al-Islam al-Shahhal [the son of Salim] returned to Tripoli from Saudi Arabia with a lot of money. He succeeded in surrounding himself with hundreds of young men who became Salafis.[30]

According to Sheikh Hilal, the Syrians initially gave a free hand to Islamic movements at the beginning of the 1990s because their main concern was the Christian opposition to their presence. In a climate of identity crisis and relative political stability, Salafism grew rapidly. Daʿi al-Islam al-Shahhal successfully developed the group established by his father into a network of charity and educational institutions, which operated not only in the North but also in almost every Sunni region. The organization's name became the above-mentioned Jamaʿiyyat al-Hidaya wa-l-Ihsan, and its main supporter was Mu'assasat al-Haramayn (the Haramayn Institution), one of the largest Saudi charities that mainly sponsors activist Salafis.

Among the other notable figures who began the Salafi *daʿwa* in Tripoli was Sheikh ʿAbdullah Husayn, a former physicist who had previously lived in France. He gave up his career in Europe and turned to religion, allegedly after a car accident that almost cost him his life.[31] Unlike many of the other Salafis in the city, he had never had any connections with the Gulf but adopted Salafi *ʿaqida* and *manhaj* through his reading. He is currently the owner of an Islamic bookshop in the ancient market of Tripoli and spends most of his time educating young people about the basic tenets of the religion. At the end of the 1980s, many young Tripolitan men became Salafis after participating in his study circles and then joined other groups.

In the end stages of the civil war, an intensive struggle erupted between different Islamic movements for the soul of the Lebanese Sunni community, and this also had an impact on the Salafi movement. Four movements – al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya, the Salafis, al-Ahbash (a Sufi-oriented group), and

some Sufi brotherhoods – tried to extend their influence. As explained above, the social situation and the mental state of the Sunnis at this time facilitated the proliferation of these movements. All of the Islamic groups, with the possible exception of the Sufi brotherhoods, intended to gain as much influence as possible in Sunni religious institutions, especially the mosques. From the 1980s to the mid-1990s, there was almost daily violence between al-Ahbash on the one side and al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya and the Salafis on the other, as they tried to occupy each other's mosques. This period of tension with al-Ahbash played an important role in the development of the Salafi movement, and therefore it is worth devoting some paragraphs to this dynamic.

Al-Ahbash appeared in Lebanon in the 1960s, when the Ethiopian-born Sheikh ʿAbdullah al-Harari[32] succeeded in gathering a considerable number of disciples around him. However, for more than two decades, the movement did not do anything else than organize study groups for the instruction of Harari's disciples. Al-Ahbash gained prominence in 1983 when the disciples of al-Harari took over an old charity, Jamaʿiyyat al-Mashariʿ al-Khairiyya al-Islamiyya (the Association of Islamic Philanthropic Projects), which became their organizational body. After this, the members of the movement gradually took over more and more neighbourhoods in Beirut, filling the vacuum created by the rapidly waning influence of the leftist militias due to the Israeli invasion. The movement was able to gain a foothold in all of the areas inhabited by Sunnis.

Al-Ahbash can be considered a countermovement to Islamism in general but especially to Salafism. Its ideology mostly builds on *al-Ashʿariyya* (explained in the previous chapter) and the *Shafiʿi madhab*. In his teaching, Al-Harari also includes the thoughts of three Sufi orders that he considers to be "acceptable". Al-Ahbash's main critique of Islamism is that its proponents create a political ideology from religion that is intended to capture the state. Salafis are regarded as innovators; Al-Harari considers Ibn Taymiyya and Muhammad bin ʿAbd al-Wahhab to be innovative because of their literal understanding of the text. They are accused of anthropomorphism, due to the Salafis' literal understanding of God's attributes. In general, according to Ashʿari thought, a metaphorical interpretation of the text is needed to avoid anthropomorphism which leads to disbelief. Al-Harari even calls the two above-mentioned scholars "unbelievers".[33] Kabha and Erlich point out that the message of Al-Ahbash to Muslims is much harsher than that toward non-Muslims.[34] While they have a reconciliatory approach toward the latter, they even practise *takfir* (excommunication) toward those Muslims whom they consider to be extremists.

The struggle between Al-Ahbash and Salafism has a transnational dimension, and its roots lie in the secession of the Province of Harar from Ethiopia. In the 1940s, Salafis gained influence in Harar and attempted to regain independence from the Ethiopian state and revive the 900-year-old Islamic emirate. One of the chief rivals of this Salafi group was Sheikh ʿAbdullah al-Harari, who was a firm believer in Muslim-Christian co-existence and a supporter of the integration of Muslims in Harar into the Ethiopian state. The secessionist Salafi organization was defeated in 1948, and its leader, Sheikh Yusuf ʿAbd al-Rahman, emigrated to Saudi Arabia in 1976. After settling in Medina, he immediately launched an attack on his old enemy, Sheikh ʿAbdullah. He was able to convince the highest echelons of the Saudi Salafi establishment to support him in his struggle. The chief mufti of the kingdom, ʿAbdulaziz bin Baz, even issued a *fatwa* stating that Al-Ahbash was not part of *Ahl al-Sunna wa-l-Jamaʿa* (the Community of Sunnis). According to one of my Lebanese Salafi informants, some Salafi groups in Tripoli received extraordinary funding from Saudi Arabia to finance the struggle against Al-Ahbash. However, I should stress that this statement has not been corroborated by other sources.

This tension at an ideological level manifested itself in what were sometimes bloody clashes in the streets of Beirut, Tripoli, and other Sunni-inhabited places. Al-Ahbash started to occupy the mosques, even those that were under the supervision of Dar al-Fatwa, under the pretext that the institution was too weak to protect places of worship from the infiltration of extremists (that is, the Muslim Brothers and the Salafis). As one of the Salafis in Tripoli remembers:

> Al-Ahbash usually came at the Friday prayer to the mosques. They waited for the appropriate moment, then started a discussion about a certain topic such as whether the angels are male or female, or is it allowed for Muslims to use disinfectants containing alcohol. If the *khatib* [preacher] or the imam of the mosque did not agree with them, then they came back later with 20-30 men, sometimes badly beat up respectable scholars, and took over the mosque. After several such occasions, we [the Salafis] also became violent in this way and began using the same methods.[35]

The tensions between Al-Ahbash and the Salafis reached a climax when a group of Salafi youth belonging to ʿUsbat al-Ansar, a militant group in the ʿAin al-Hilwa Palestinian refugee camp in Sidon, murdered the head of the organization of al-Ahbash Sheikh Nizar al-Halabi in 1995. This event led to

the continuous persecution of Salafis by the Lebanese and Syrian security forces, resulting in the movement's current disintegrated, many-headed nature.

At the same time, the tensions with Al-Ahbash created a significant opportunity for Salafis. Due to its violent methods and serious deviations from mainstream (*Ashʿari*) Sunni Islam, the Sufi-oriented group alienated large parts of the wider Sunni population. Salafi preachers were able to play the role of the defenders of Sunnism in the face of the "deviant" group. They also posed as the representatives of authenticity in the face of dangerous innovations. For the first time, Salafi preachers were able to attract larger crowds to their Friday sermons.[36]

In addition to these specific opportunities, one should mention that there was a serious constraint on the Salafi *daʿwa*. The constant jihadi presence in Lebanon since the early 1990s has seriously impeded Salafi activism in the country. I did not include jihadi Salafis in my fieldwork, since it is almost impossible to make deep observations about their activities for security reasons. However, at this point, it is important to note how their activities affect those Salafis who opt for peaceful methods.

Jihadi groups have appeared in Lebanon among frustrated Sunni youth in the North and in the Western Beqaʿ and in the Palestinian refugee camps. Jihadi rhetoric appeals to certain segments of the young Sunni population, because it helps them to express a religious identity in the face of the perceived Shiʿite threat. Young Sunni Muslims feel deprived of the opportunity to participate in the jihad against Israel, since Hizbullah is monopolizing the armed resistance in the South. Participating in transnational jihad offers them an alternative. Indeed, many Lebanese Sunnis from the outskirts of Tripoli and the Western Beqaʿ travelled to Iraq to participate in the fighting against the US army.

Jihadi culture is also flourishing in Palestinian refugee camps. These are "black holes" in Lebanon, where the state institutions have no right to enter. The camps are controlled by Palestinian-armed factions such as Fatah and Hamas, but they are unable to take full control. The camps are therefore safe havens for criminal gangs and jihadi cells. ʿAin al-Hilwa camp in Sidon is the base of ʿUsbat al-Ansar, one of the biggest jihadi militias in the whole of the Middle East. According to a Palestinian Salafi who is in contact with some of the jihadis in Sidon, ʿUsbat al-Ansar has 5,000 fighters. This means that it is the second largest Lebanese armed faction after Hizbullah. Transnational jihadis are also able to infiltrate the camps and set up training centres for fighters to be sent to Iraq or Afghanistan. Although jihadis mostly regard

Lebanon as a place of transit, many jihadi attacks and conflicts between the militants and the army have occurred in the past two decades. The most significant were the six-day battle between the army and a jihadi group in Dinniyeh on the eve of 1999-2000, and the battle of Nahar al-Barid. After more than three months of fighting between the Lebanese armed forces and Fatah al-Islam, pressure increased on the whole Salafi community. Since Salafi youth from the networks of non-jihadi sheikhs have sometimes joined militant groups and participated in jihadi operations, the whole movement has been regarded as a source of radicalism. In the last few years, many young Salafis have been arrested, often without charge. In one instance, the Lebanese security forces, with the active help of the Palestinian factions, expelled the Salafis from the Baddawi Palestinian camp. Organizing informal study circles always provokes suspicion on the part of the authorities, which can lead to arrests. Many Salafis have shaved their beards and have stopped wearing Islamic clothes so as to escape the attention of the internal security service. This environment, however, may favour some purist Salafis who emphasize their hostility toward jihadis and al-Qaeda, and try to integrate into state institutions by joining Dar al-Fatwa.

3

THE EMERGENCE OF SALAFI FACTIONS IN TRIPOLI

All of the various Salafi factions that I described in the first chapter (purists and activists) are present in Tripoli. In this chapter, I will explain the development of these factions and the nature of the differences between them. I will use a different approach from that which is usually used when discussing Salafi groups, however. Past writings on Salafism have analysed the movement in the context of specific nation-states and only mention in passing that these movements have transnational contacts and dimensions.[1] However, in my opinion, this methodological nationalism does not give us a clear picture of the real nature of Salafism. One of the main reasons for this is that it is difficult to describe a movement that denies the validity of national borders using such a framework. In my analysis, I would instead like to highlight the fact that Salafi individuals in certain localities form part of larger transnational networks. When I distinguish different streams among Tripoli's Salafis, my units of analysis are not organizations but rather networks constituted by individuals with diverse local and transnational network ties. These networks are usually formed along different ideological lines, though they often overlap.

In Tripoli, the Salafi community was relatively unified until the second half the 1990s. Although they never developed formal organizational structures, they mainly gathered around Jamaʿiyyat al-Hidaya wa-l-Ihsan and its leader, Daʿi al-Islam al-Shahhal. As many of my informants recalled, this was due to Sheikh Daʿi's prestige and authority, along with his financial power, since he was in contact with many charitable organizations in Saudi Arabia as well as wealthy individuals who generously financed the Lebanese Salafi movement. According to Sheikh ʿAli Taha, one of the prominent Salafi *ʿulama* in Tripoli's Tabbaneh district, "incredible amounts of money arrived from Saudi Arabia, mostly from the *Muʾassasat al-Haramayn* [al-Haramayn Institution] for mosque-building, distributing Salafi literature and charitable purposes".[2] Over less than a decade, Daʿi al-Islam al-Shahhal was able to establish a vast charitable and educational network not only in Tripoli and its extended urban area but also in all of the Sunni regions in the country. This

emerging Salafi charitable empire was subsequently demolished, however, when the Lebanese judiciary ordered the closing of Jamaʿiyyat al-Hidaya wa-l-Ihsan in 1996, accusing the organization of inciting sectarian hatred. The event can be understood as part of the aftermath of the general crackdown on Islamists after the murder of Nizar Halabi, the favourite of the Syrian-Lebanese security regime.[3]

According to Sheikh Daʿi's younger brother, Abu Bakr al-Shahhal, some members of Al-Ahbash reported to the internal security service that at Maʿhad al-Hidaya (Hidaya School), one of the Salafi organization's educational centres in Tripoli's Abu Samra district, students were being taught from a book that contained violent anti-Shiʿa statements. According to Abu Bakr al-Shahhal, only a single textbook published by Jamaʿiyyat al-Hidaya wa-l-Ihsan contained some pages from the ominous book, and they do not refer to the Shiʿa. The organization was able to continue its activities until 2000, however, when the final crackdown occurred. Daʿi al-Islam al-Shahhal's name was mentioned in connection with a jihadi group that had between 200 and 300 members and that had fought against the army for several days in late 1999.[4] According to accusations made by the Lebanese judiciary, some of the militants had connections to Jamaʿiyyat al-Hidaya wa-l-Ihsan. After the battle, many members of the organization were arrested, and Sheikh Daʿi fled to Saudi Arabia to escape possible persecution.[5] Jamaʿiyyat al-Hidaya wa-l-Ihsan was re-established after the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon in 2005.

The second factor that led to the split of the Salafi movement was the drying up of Saudi financial sources following the 9/11 terror attacks and the subsequent "war on terror". The US accused various Islamic charity organizations of directly or indirectly financing terrorists. Washington put pressure on the governments of the Gulf States to more closely control their citizens' charity activities and close those organizations that might have links to al-Qaeda and other militant groups. The most notable case was the closure of the biggest transnational charity, Mu'assasat al-Haramayn. The organization had been founded in 1988 in Karachi, officially to help Afghan refugees. Its founder, Sheikh ʿAqil al-ʿAqil, a descendant of a prominent Saudi family, was able to reach a huge network of Saudi and Gulf businessmen to support his charity. As the world's biggest Islamic charity, al-Haramayn Institution opened branches in almost every Islamic country, along with the US and Europe (in Bosnia and the Netherlands).[6] The organization became the largest supporter of the Salafis in Lebanon. According to my informants, the Salafis received tens of millions of dollars from them. Owing to American

pressure after the 11 September attacks, the Saudi government restricted the rights of al-Haramayn to support Salafi groups in foreign countries and then closed the institution altogether in 2004. Salafis in Lebanon thus lost a substantial source of their funding and had to look for alternative sources.

After the closing of Mu'assasat al-Haramayn and Sheikh Daʿi's escape to Saudi Arabia, Lebanese Salafi individuals became part of the movement's transnational dimension, and began looking for alternative sources of money. Most of them used contacts that had been established during their studies at the Islamic University of Medina or during their visits to the Kingdom for pilgrimage. These Salafis mainly built networks with individuals and charities that held similar ideological views. This led to the development of two mainstream Salafi networks in the country, excluding the numerous militant cells. Both of them can be defined using the classification outlined in Chapter One. The first is a purist network, mostly supported by the Kuwaiti Jamaʿiyyat Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami (the Revival of Islamic Heritage Society) charity organization. The second can be defined as *haraki* and receives sponsorship from the Qatari Sheikh Eid Charity Organization and rich individuals from the Arabian Gulf. Both networks are simply nodes of larger transnational networks. To understand their dynamics and evolution, we must first review some crucial historical developments that are described briefly below.

The fractionalization of Salafis worldwide has its roots in the evolution of religious authority in Saudi Arabia. When Saudi Arabia emerged as an international actor in the second half of the 20th century, the outlook of the Salafi *ʿulama* class was still parochial, focused only on the correct *ʿaqida* and rituals and unable to tackle questions related to politics and society. When Syrian and Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood members escaping from secular regimes found refuge in Saudi Arabia, they influenced the younger generation with their politicized ideology (while they themselves adopted the Salafi creed and religious practices[7]). From the beginning of the 1970s, debates in religious study circles increasingly began to revolve around questions of legitimacy, international politics, and individual political rights. These debates led to the evolution of the two distinguishable streams in Salafism, which I labelled earlier in this volume as purist and *haraki*. On the eve of the Gulf War in 1991, these differences came to a head when the purist state *ʿulama* legitimized the American presence on the soil of Saudi Arabia. *Haraki* Salafis saw this decision as an invitation for colonization, and in their view, it highlighted the purists' attitude of servitude towards the royal family. This debate was held in most of the world's Salafi communities and created deep schisms within them.

Since many Lebanese Salafis studied in Saudi Arabia and all of them have contacts with the Gulf countries, they did not remain unaffected by the above-mentioned debates. The most interesting Salafi discourse revolves around the relationship between Muslims and the multiconfessional Lebanese society. The differences of opinion reflect the traditional purist-*haraki* distinction.

HARAKI SALAFIS

The network that I have identified as *haraki* has mostly developed around the person of Daʿi al-Islam al-Shahhal, since he has a similar ideological orientation. *Harakis* generally view Lebanon as a battleground in a universe in which infidel powers are fighting against each other but have the common aim of destroying Islam. In their arguments, they often refer to *aya* 101 from Surat al-Nisa': "The disbelievers are your sworn enemies."[8] Lebanon, as the most Westernized Arab state, is the starting point of the *kuffar*, from which they can extend their dominance to the whole Levant and then the Middle East. In *haraki* Salafi discourse, Sunni Muslims present the only obstacle to this plan. To preserve their existence and stop their enemies, Muslims have to fight a battle on two levels. At the local level, Westernization and the growing Shiʿite influence must be stopped. At the global level, Ahl al-Sunna wa-l-Jamaʿa in Lebanon has to participate in the effort to reunify the *umma* under the leadership of a caliph. Therefore, it is not enough for Muslims to focus only on religious practice (although this is also important); they also have to speak out against the Western and Shiʿite conspiracy. For instance, in his lectures and public statements, Sheikh Daʿi al-Islam al-Shahhal often pictures the Salafis as defenders of the Sunni community in Lebanon. At his last press conference (at the time of writing in December 2010), he accused the Shiʿites of planting clandestine militant cells in Sunni majority areas. In fact, a large part of the Lebanese Salafi discourse touches on the Shiʿite question and the role of Hizbullah. Salafis traditionally feel strong hostility toward the Shiʿites and regard them as heretics or infidels.[9] This can be traced back to the early period of the emergence of the traditionalist school (see Chapter One). Ahmad bin Hanbal was the first to call the Shiʿites *rawafid* (rejectionists), since they do not recognize the legitimacy of the first three caliphs.[10] Anti-Shiʿite sentiment is strong in Ibn Taymiyya's writings, but Muhammad bin ʿAbd al-Wahhab developed it as one of the core tenets of Salafi ideology. The anti-Shiʿite discourse of the Syrian Muslim Brothers further inspired

haraki Salafis.[11] Lebanese Salafi preachers portray the strengthening of the Shiʿite community in the country and the growing power of Hizbullah as part of the "global Shiʿite conspiracy", due to growing Sunni-Shiʿite tensions in Lebanon in recent years.

Probably the most notorious anti-Shiʿite cleric in Tripoli is Dr. Zakariyya al-Masri, an influential preacher in the Hamza mosque in al-Qubba district. Al-Masri was one of the first Lebanese to gain a doctoral degree at Medina University. His anti-Shiʿa sentiments have allegedly led to several attempts on his life by Hizbullah and its allies.[12] He has dedicated several sermons and writings to "shed light on the real nature of the Shiʿa". He regards the Shiʿites as corrupted in their belief and claims that this has resulted in their continuous conspiracy against the "Ahl al-Sunna wa-l-Jamaʿa".

In one of his polemical writings, he repeats the common theory among Salafis that the Shiʿa was founded by a Yemeni Jew, ʿAbdullah bin Sabaʾ: "[He] pretended to be Muslim in the period of ʿUthman bin ʿAffan [the third caliph] and insinuated himself in his favor to destroy Islam from inside. He stirred up strife as his ancestor Paul the Jew had done it with the Christians".[13] According to Zakariya al-Masri, the first internal strife or *fitna* happened when ʿAbdullah bin Sabaʾ set the poor of the early Islamic empire against the rich by citing the following Qur'anic verse: "those who hoard gold and silver instead of giving in God's cause, they will have a grievous punishment".[14] He was also able to attract one of the Sahaba, Abu Dharr, to his cause.[15] The second major *fitna* caused by ʿAbdullah bin Sabaʾ was the revolt which led to the murder of ʿUthman in 656 AD.

After discussing the origins of the Shiʿa, Zakariya al-Masri gives a detailed explanation of the heretical elements of this branch of Islam (which he refers to as the Shiʿite religion, refusing to acknowledge it as an Islamic religious school). According to him, the Shiʿites believe that the Qur'an was altered (*muharraf*) by the first three caliphs and that part of it is missing. They think that the Prophet gave the correct version of the Book to ʿAli, and the hidden imam will present it after his return. Al-Masri also criticizes the Shiʿite belief in the infallible imamate and the return of the *mahdi* (the Messiah in the Islamic context) and several other details that I cannot discuss here. His most important criticism concerns the Shiʿite doctrine of the *taqiyya* or dissimulation, which he thinks is what really makes the Shiʿite sect an eternal evil. Originally, the doctrine of *taqiyya* allowed the Shiʿa as a minority sect to hide their true beliefs or identity in a hostile environment. Sheikh Zakariyya al-Masri depicts this as an element of the Shiʿite creed that urges its followers to mislead and cheat non-Shiʿites, whom they regard as enemies. He

concludes: "Then how can we know what they say or do is *taqiyya* or not? We cannot be safe from the people of the *taqiyya* [the Shiʿites] if we only close all doors and roads in front of them. It is not possible to cooperate with them on any level, be it political, religious, military, intellectual or any other."[16]

According to the reasoning of al-Masri, the erroneous Shiʿite creed led to continuous conspiracies against the Sunnis throughout history. He mentions that they collaborated with the crusaders against Muslim states in the Middle East. But their gravest sin in the Middle Ages was to help the Mongols conquer Baghdad and abolish the Abbasid Caliphate.[17]

Zakariyya al-Masri argues that their conspiracy continues in the modern period. In his reading of events, since the Islamic Revolution, Iran has constantly been trying to dominate the Middle East. First, the Iranians tried it achieve this by spreading their ideology via direct military means, but they failed to do so, since "Iraq with the leadership of Saddam Hussein made their aspirations fail and resisted them with the support of the Gulf countries".[18] After that, Iran began to move the Shiʿite minorities throughout the Islamic world to spread the revolution. Here, the author mentions that the Shiʿite communities in Saudi Arabia and Iraq revolted several times. Sheikh Zakariyya al-Masri states that the Iranian leadership has a secret alliance with the US and helped the latter to conquer Afghanistan and Iraq by supporting local Shiʿite minorities against the Taliban, "that held the ideology of unifying Muslims under the banner of the Caliphate", and Saddam Hussein, who "turned from nationalist to Islamist at the last period of his rule".[19] According to Sheikh Zakariyya, the other ally of Iran is *al-ʿAlmaniyya al-Sharqiyya* (Eastern Secularism), namely China, which he sees as the successor to the Soviet Union and Iran's main arms supplier. His implication is that the Shiʿites are even ready to ally with an atheist, Communist power against the Sunnis.

Sheikh Zakariyya al-Masri frames contemporary developments in Lebanon as part of this global Shiʿite conspiracy against the Sunnis. In order to make the whole country Shiʿite, Iran has allied itself with the *Nusayriyya*[20] (the Syrian regime dominated by the Alavites).[21] According to Zakariyya, the Iranians began to execute their plan during the civil war, from the beginning of the 1980s onwards. They established Hizbullah, which he regards as the Lebanese branch of the Revolutionary Guard that has, since that time, constantly has been trying to rid the country of its Sunni presence. They initially supported the Shiʿite AMAL militia in its military campaign against the Palestinians in the mid-1980s (the event known as *Harb al-Mukhayyamat* or "the war of the camps"). Their plan was "to weaken Ahl al-Sunna by ridding them of their military power",[22] represented by the Palestinian factions.

At the same time, they tried to spread Shiʿism in Tripoli, assisted by Syria. When the Syrians were unable to conquer the city militarily, Iran sent emissaries to the leader of the Unification Movement Saʿid Shaʿaban, requesting him to end his struggle against them and to turn his weapons against the Christian Phalangist militia. When the Shiʿites and the militia of the Lebanese Alavite minority were able to strengthen their positions in the two entrance points of the city, Shaʿban had to give up its resistance. After that, Iran proposed to Shaʿban that an Islamic state should be established on the Iranian model, and offered him the role of president of this Islamic republic in Lebanon.

Zakariyya al-Masri depicts Hizbullah as the main agent of the establishment of a Shiʿite state in Lebanon (as do most Salafis). In his view, the party has not refrained from forming an alliance with Israel. In one of his sermons, he states that Israeli military exercises between 31 May and 4 June 2009 were organized by the Jewish state to support Hizbullah in the parliamentary elections of 9 June. The aim was "to help the party in an indirect way to gain more votes"[23] by inciting fear in Lebanon of the Israeli threat. Hizbullah has an interest in maintaining tensions with the Jewish state in order to portray itself as a pioneer of the resistance and thereby gain the legitimacy to keep its weapons and increase its political influence. However, its ultimate plan is to dominate Lebanon and eliminate the Sunni population by displacement or by converting them to Shiʿism.

Zakariyya al-Masri's portrayal of the Shiʿa and Hizbullah is not unique but rather mirrors the general views of *haraki* Salafi preachers in Tripoli and the North. In his book, which puts forward a "*shariʿa*-based approach" to the causes of the 2006 Lebanese-Israeli war, Ahmad Taha argues that he who does not regard the Shiʿites as apostate is also an apostate: "Who courses the Sahaba or thinks that Angel Jibril[24] made a mistake by transmitting the Message is undoubtedly an apostate … moreover, who doubts in the disbelief of such a person is also apostate!"[25] Like Zakariya al-Masri, he also thinks that it is in the nature of the Shiʿa to constantly conspire against the Sunnis. In 2006, Hizbullah provoked Israel to draw attention from the Shiʿite militia's real aims in Lebanon and to help the Syrian leader Bashar al-Asad create confusion in Lebanon so as to be able to secure the domination of the Shiʿa in the country.[26]

I have also collected recordings of sermons by less famous, local Salafi preachers. One of the most remarkable among them is Sheikh Hilal Turkomani, whose name was mentioned above. In one of his sermons, given on 9 May 2008, just a day after Hizbullah's and its allies' military takeover in Beirut, he adopts a similar perspective to Zakariya al-Masri when talking

about the history of the Shiʿa. He mentions the numerous "treacheries" committed by the "*rafida*" against the Sunnis, then concludes that indeed, the brave behaviour of Hizbullah's fighters does not resemble the "sneaky and cowardly style of the Shiʿa". But he warns his audience to "wait! As soon as Iran acquires nuclear weapons, the behaviour of that party will change", and they will become like Jaish al-Mahdi in Iraq, "who massacre and displace the Ahl al-Sunna". Then, when he refers to Hizbullah's military actions against fellow Lebanese the previous day, he cites a *hadith*: "he who takes up arms against us is not from us"; in other words, he again emphasizes that Hizbullah is not a Muslim organization.[27]

In the version of events put forward by *haraki* Salafis, a Muslim's relationship with the Lebanese state and society is shaped by the struggle with Western and Eastern secularism and Sunni-Shiʿite tensions. The situation in Lebanon is different from that in Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern states. While elsewhere *harakis* struggle for more political freedoms and representation so as to be able to Islamicize society and politics, in Lebanon they urge their followers to act according to what they see as Ahl al-Sunna's protection from the Shiʿite threat. Therefore, they have to ally themselves with "the Lesser Evil" (*aqall al-dararayn*)"; that is, the Sunni political block of Saʿd al-Hariri's Future Movement, which is led by Westernized secular politicians. In their reasoning, "of course the caliphate would be the best option, but we are currently not at that stage … Now we have to support those who don't interfere in our religious affairs and don't oppress us".[28] In one of his sermons, Sheikh Zakariyya al-Masri argues that the rulings of Islam can be divided into two categories: optional (*ikhtiyari*) and obligatory (*idtirari*). The first means that some rulings of Islam only have to be implemented if it is possible to do so. For instance, fasting is not obligatory in case of illness. Today, Muslims are in a condition of weakness, therefore *shariʿa* cannot be fully implemented and an Islamic state cannot be established. Muslims therefore have to support "Western secularism" (*al-ʿalmaniyya al-gharbiyya*), which allows the free practice of religion, against "Eastern secularism" (*al-ʿalmaniyya al-sharqiyya*), which wants to abolish religion altogether. The first is represented by the US and Europe, the second by China. Both are represented in Lebanon: Western secularism is represented by the Future Movement and the March 14 block, Eastern secularism by Hizbullah. Zakariyya al-Masri argues that:

> participation in the parliament to ally with the Western secularism against the Eastern one means the achievement of the common interests … that is based on God's saying: 'help one another to do what is right and good; do not help

> one another towards sin and hostility' [Surat al-Ma'ida 2]. While if we don't participate in the [electoral] campaign and the voting, we open the door to the enemies of Islam.[29]

He also cites the example of *Hilf al-Fudul,* an alliance between the Islamic Arab tribes – some of which held different beliefs – "to abolish injustice and help its victim". Even the Prophet approved of this, saying: "If you would establish such an alliance within the Islamic community, I would approve it." According to the preacher, the alliance of Salafis with the Future Movement and its allies (who are often Christians) falls into the category of *Hilf al-Fudul*.[30]

Zakariya al-Masri was the first to suggest that Salafis, along with other Islamic movements, should be integrated into the Ifta' (or Dar al-Fatwa), the official religious representative body in the contemporary states in the Muslim world. According to al-Masri, taking this step would solve certain problems: namely, the question of legitimacy and unifying the different Islamic groups and movements. Salafis think that Muslim loyalty toward the Christian president of Lebanon is un-Islamic but that (Sunni) Muslims can be loyal to the Ifta'. As an institution rather than a person, Ifta' can deal with the non-Muslim authorities via official, legal channels. The Ifta' would also provide Islamic movements with a forum to debate and resolve their differences. The mufti, as head of the Ifta', can function as the mediator and the main judge between them.

Many Salafis accept this formula. For instance, Sheikh Hilal Turkomani, who has a picture of Tripoli's Mufti Malik Shaʿar in the hall of his villa, also urges fellow Islamists to unite under the banner of Dar al-Fatwa. He thinks that Salafis should support and even join the Muslim Brothers, as happened in Yemen,[31] to achieve a higher level of Islamization of politics, since the latter have already acquired sufficient political sophistication and experience.[32]

PURIST SALAFIS

Purist networks in the Tripoli area have developed both around the individuals who left Sheikh Daʿi al-Islam al-Shahhal's network in the late 1990s and early 2000s and religious scholars who independently went to study in Saudi Arabia after Egypt placed limits on the scholarships given to international students. During my fieldwork, I identified Salafis who belong to the purist-politically-oriented and purist-rejectionist factions. The best example of the former is the network that emerged around Jamaʿiyyat Waqf al-Turath al-

Islami (the Society of Islamic Heritage Endowment, or SIHE). The association is led by Safwan al-Zaʿbi, a young Tripolitan businessman who calls himself "sheikh" (something that tends not to be acknowledged by others, due to his alleged lack of religious knowledge). The Association is regarded as the local agent of the Kuwaiti-based charitable organization, Jamaʿiyyat Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami (the Revival of Islamic Heritage Society, or RIHS), which I will discuss at length in the following chapter. Here it suffices to mention that the organization is one of the greatest supporters of Salafism worldwide and mainly sponsors purists. According to my informants in Kuwait, the RIHS insists that its beneficiaries should maintain good relations with the government of their country and oppose extremism, since this will facilitate their *daʿwa*.

I met Safwan al-Zaʿbi several times over the past three years. In his view, Salafis must be integrated into Lebanese civil society because this would best serve the interests of the *daʿwa*. He believes the Lebanese state is not repressive and that all religious groups are free to express their own views and practise their religion, and therefore it would not make sense to totally reject it.

The politically motivated purist faction's views on the relationship of Muslims with the Lebanese state and society are captured in a *fatwa*[33] issued by a council of *ʿulama* in Tripoli, created and financed by Jamaʿiyyat Waqf al-Turath al-Islami. The *fatwa* legitimizes the political participation of the Salafis and urges them to vote in the 2009 parliamentary elections. The writers of the fatwa believe that "we live in a multiconfessional society where different religious groups and intellectual streams live together. It is not possible for one of them to dominate the others; this is one of the characteristics of Lebanese society".[34] Therefore, "it does not harm the [Muslim] candidate if he uses the parliament as a tool for *al-ʿamr bil-maʿruf wa al-nahi ʿan al-munkar* (*hisba*) and also as a tool for the *daʿwa* by offering his thoughts and principles, [especially] if he does that through the media".[35] They claim that participating in electing representatives to the parliament is legitimate, since Lebanese law does not oblige them to make decisions that are un-Islamic. It is also possible to elect non-Muslim candidates if they serve Muslim interests. In their reasoning, the authors of the *fatwa* first refer to the Qur'anic exegesis of ʿAbd al-Rahman bin Saʿdi (1889-1956), a widely quoted Saudi scholar who followed the example of the prophet Shuʿayb (mentioned in the Qur'an) when he urged Muslims to participate in political life if they lived in a society that had no Muslim majority:[36]

> God may defend the believers in many ways, some of which they may know and some they may not know at all. He may defend them by means of their

> tribe or their *kafir* compatriots, as God defended Shu'ayb from the stoning of his people by means of his clan. There is nothing wrong with striving to maintain these connections by means of which Islam and the Muslims may be defended, and in some cases that may be essential, because *daʿwa* is required according to ability.
>
> Based on this, if Muslims help those who are under the rule of the *kuffar*, and strive to make the state a republic in which the religious and worldly rights of individuals and peoples are protected, that is better than their submitting to a state that denies their religious and worldly rights, and is keen to destroy them and make them its servants. Yes, if it is possible to make the state an Islamic one where Muslims are the rulers, that is what should be done, but when that is not possible then the next priority is supporting a type of state where religious and worldly interests are protected. And God knows best.[37]

Second, the *fatwa* refers to the example of the prophet Yusuf, when he accepted the Pharaoh's offer to be the supervisor of Egypt's warehouses. Although Yusuf had to act according to the law of the Pharaoh and not that of God, by this action, he was able to save his youngest brother. As the Qur'an relates, Yusuf's brothers wanted to return to their homeland, and Yusuf was concerned lest they might harm the youngest brother. He therefore had a precious goblet belonging to the Pharaoh hidden in the latter's baggage and had his officials carry out an inspection in which they discovered this item. This allowed him to arrest his youngest brother and thereby save his life. According to the authors of the *fatwa,* this means that he "who trusts himself that he is able to be of benefit [to the Muslim community], turn away corruption and serve the common interest can be a representative in the parliament and [he] who trusts him must vote for him".[38] They even think that political participation in a non-Muslim country can be a religious duty for Muslims if, by doing so, they serve the interests of their community.

The stance of this Salafi faction towards the Shiʿites is also different from that of the *harakis*. As I was able to observe during my fieldwork, they rarely refer to Hizbullah or the political role of the Lebanese Shiʿites in their sermons. As Sheikh Muhammad ʿAbd al-Ghani, a member of the aforementioned *ʿulama* council, explained to me, "we have differences and disputes with the Shiʿa, mostly on dogmatic grounds, but this cannot be resolved by ill-founded accusations that only incite sectarian hatred".[39] He thinks that Salafis have to keep a distance from Hizbullah and the Shiʿites in general, and focus on their own religious affairs. Safwan al-Zaʿbi even signed a memorandum of understanding with Hizbullah in August 2008, but since the

majority of the Salafis did not support it and it was attacked by major political forces such as the Future Movement, he had to retreat from it.

The picture would not be complete if I were not to mention the purist-rejectionist Salafis, who maintain a considerable distance from political issues and forbid participation in Lebanese elections. One of their representatives is Sheikh Saʿd al-Din al-Kibbi, who is the director of an impressive Salafi centre, the al-Bukhari School (*Maʿhad al-Bukhari*) in ʿAkkar, about 15 kilometres from Tripoli. He mentioned that he had belonged to the Muslim Brothers between 1978 and 1982 but had then left the organization. The reason for this was the "hizbiyya" and the Muslim Brotherhood's practice of participating in elections and parliamentary work. He believes that Muslims should obey the law, even in a secular system, but should not actively cooperate with the system by being part of it, since it can corrupt their creed. He thinks that this is what happened in the case of the Muslim Brothers.

I also discovered a purist-rejectionist group in the Abu Samra district of Tripoli. Their main centre is the Sunna mosque, which, interestingly, was built by Safwan al-Zaʿbi and given to them. While al-Zaʿbi is active in politics and charity work, this group rejects such pursuits. I carried out a couple of interviews with one of their prominent figures, Sheikh Wisam, a self-educated *ʿalim* who lives at his *manaqish* restaurant.[40] He told me that he strictly opposes any participation in the political process of an apostate system, such as in Lebanon. Furthermore, he also rejects organized charitable work such as the activities of the RIHS (see above) and its local branch. In addition, he believes that, aside from leading to partisanship (*hizbiyya*), organized charitable work contributes to the inability of the population of Northern Lebanon to escape poverty:

> People are accustomed to getting a pittance from the charities or the *zuʿama* to fill their stomachs, and they do not have to do anything for it. Therefore they have no aspirations to improve their situations – to learn a profession or open a business. Islam, however, tells people to be hardworking. *Zakat* funds also should help people who want to open an enterprise as it happened in the time of the Salaf.[41]

Sheikh Wisam also told me that he thinks that this attitude is a tool of tyrants, because they can easily control those people who have nothing but the small alms that they receive. In his network, people help each other by finding jobs or by giving loans to open restaurants or shops.[42]

4

MOBILIZATION STRUCTURES

For the most part, the mobilization structures of the Salafi community differ from those of mainstream Islamist movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood or Hizb al-Tahrir. The former rely almost exclusively on informal structures, while formal institutions dominate the latter.

The literature on social movements has shown that informal structures such as kinship, family or friendship are important for every social movement in any society.[1] However, informal structures in the Global South, and especially in the Middle East, are even more important for several reasons. In these societies, patronage and kinship networks are more prominent than elsewhere[2] and can function as excellent channels for mobilization and recruitment of social movements. The oppressive environment in these countries often paralyses formal institutions, while it is more difficult for the authorities to uncover informal channels.[3] Although the Muslim Brothers mostly rely on a sophisticated institutional structure, they also maintain informal channels to society more generally.[4]

Unlike mainstream Islamist movements, Salafis rely almost exclusively on informal networks. This is not only because they are regarded with suspicion by Middle Eastern governments, especially since 9/11. Their worldview and ideology also lead them to refuse to establish formal institutional structures. Most Salafis emphasize that they do not constitute a movement in the traditional sense (*haraka*) but rather an intellectual school (*tayyar fikri*). According to them, creating different organizations only strengthens divisions between Muslims. As Muhammad bin al-ʿUthaymin (1925-2001), one of the greatest Salafi authorities, wrote:

> I think that Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah should unite, even though they differ in the ways in which they understand those texts that may be interpreted in different ways. This is a matter in which there is room for difference, may God be praised. What matters is harmony and unity. No doubt the enemies of Islam want the Muslims to be divided, whether they are enemies who express their enmity openly or they are enemies who make an outward display of friend-

> liness towards Muslims and Islam, but that is not real. We must be different [from other communities] by being united, because unity is the characteristic of the saved group.[5]

Salafis regard the creation of organizations as partisanship (*hizbiyya*), and contrary to *shariʿa*. The only exceptions are charities that have no relation to politics. According to Salafis, political parties direct the loyalty of Muslims to the organization in question, and not to Islam.[6] If Salafis create any political organizations to facilitate their participation in the political process, such as in Kuwait or in Yemen, then these are umbrella organizations with no serious institutional structure.

Informal, interpersonal networks dominate the Salafi movement in Tripoli and Northern Lebanon. However, these networks are different from Sufi networks or those that have emerged around Shiʿite clerics. The latter are pyramidal in shape, with the sheikh or *marjaʿ al-taqlid* (the highest Shiʿite authority) at the apex.[7] Salafi networks are more horizontal, reflecting the Salafi worldview. In Salafi thinking, the position of authoritative figures is different from that in Sufi circles. While Sufi sheikhs distinguish themselves from the average person by claiming to have esoteric knowledge (*maʿrifa*), this does not exist in Salafism and is regarded as *shirk*. Salafis criticize the personal cults that exist in Sufi movements and urge people not to follow only one religious authority but to read the text for themselves and then compare their understanding with the writings of acknowledged *ʿulama*. Therefore, in Salafism it is rare for a network to develop exclusively around one person. The Salafi sheikhs themselves constitute elite networks that spread from Tripoli to the Gulf, and even to Europe. They also have their own networks constituted by their followers. In the following paragraphs, I will outline the composition of these networks based on my fieldwork results. I acknowledge, however, that no such sketch could be complete, as three months is too short a time to fully investigate this topic.

During my fieldwork in Lebanon, I tried to examine the networks of sheikhs who oversee local mosques and endowments. As a rough classification, I distinguish three levels in the contacts of these *ʿulama*. At the first level, we find what might be called the sheikhs' passive followers; they are numerous, but their level of commitment is moderate. They include many individuals who do not follow the rulings of Salafism to their full extent: they may shave their beards, they may smoke, and in many cases, their wives and daughters do not wear headscarves; but they do take part in Friday prayers and listen to sermons, and they may even attend the sheikh's religious les-

sons. Their children may go to summer schools organized by the mosque, where sheikhs and committed young men and women teach them the basics of (their understanding of) Islam. At the same time, the sheikhs frequently have civilian jobs as teachers in elementary schools, thereby further extending their networks. Many of these passive followers may have regular contact with the sheikh via mutual visits; they may ask services of him, such as arbitration in disputes. These networks are not only held together by religious sentiment; patronage also plays an important role, as it does throughout Lebanese society.[8] Families living in harsh economic conditions often receive support from the *waqf* administered by the sheikh. In exchange, they visit the sheikh's Friday sermons and send their children to be taught religion by the sheikh. In other words, Salafis, like most other Islamic movements, also use economic incentives to gain a foothold in society. At the same time, Salafi sheikhs often receive economic support from their followers, who pay their *zakat* to the *waqf* or even give voluntary support. According to one of my informants, Sheikh Ra'id Hulayhil, the director of *Maʿhad al-Amin* (Amin Religious School), a large part of the income of Salafi educational institutions and endowments comes from the merchant families of Tripoli.

The second level of the network consists of a relatively small number of active followers; in Tripoli, I would estimate this to be between three and four thousand individuals. These are mostly young people between the ages of 18 and 45, from all social classes. These individuals follow a Salafi lifestyle by trying to apply all of the rulings of the Salafi interpretation of Islam. Wearing a beard and (most of the time) Islamic clothing is therefore mandatory for them. They also try to perform all Islamic rituals in the correct manner according to Salafism. It is no wonder that when asked which book had the greatest impact on them, most of them answered, al-Albani's *Sifat Salat al-Nabi* (*Details of the Prophet's Prayer*). Usually, these people do not belong to the network of just one sheikh but instead visit many of them. They join the study groups' various *ʿalims* and visit a different mosque each week to listen to the Friday sermon. When I asked why they did that, they mostly answered that Muslims should listen to the opinions of more than one person; otherwise it can lead to *bidʿa,* or in the worst case, *taqdis* (sanctification) of persons, which is regarded as a lesser *shirk*. The most candid of them also gave me another reason. Many young Salafis aspire to become *daʿis* and highly respected *ʿulama* in the future. Finishing their studies at the Universities of Saudi Arabia or Kuwait greatly facilitates their careers. Many Salafi sheikhs have extensive transnational contacts and can help to further these young people's ambitions. Having more than one influential sheikh among their

close contacts naturally increases their chances. Ideologically, it is not always possible to classify these young people. They are frequently in contact with both *haraki* and purist *ʿulama* and read the literature of both factions. They can even vacillate between purist and jihadi teachings.

It is important to understand how these young people become Salafis and where the movement finds its recruits. A comprehensive survey on this issue has never been carried out, as such an exercise would present obvious difficulties. However, by analysing the life stories of these people, a somewhat accurate picture can be produced. According to my data, many committed Salafis adopted Salafi teachings after they had been active members of the Islamic community in Tripoli. One of the main pools of recruitment is the al-Ahbash organization and other Sufi brotherhoods. Many of my informants were followers of ʿAbdullah al-Harari before joining Salafism. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the inhabitants of Tripoli increasingly turned to religion, and the Ahbash in particular gained many new followers, if only because they enjoyed the support of the Syrian army and were able to acquire huge material resources.[9] However, Salafis were subsequently able to win over many former al-Ahbash members. During the 1990s, open debates frequently occurred between Habashis and other Sufis and Salafis. When I asked former Sufis and al-Ahbash members why they had left their former movements and joined Salafism, they mostly answered that the latter is more logical and does not force them to take part in the "sanctification of persons" or to adopt other "superstitions". Some others told me that they visited Habashi and Salafi groups at the same time, and then opted for the latter for the same reasons. Even more members left al-Ahbash for Salafism after the Hariri murder and the withdrawal of Syrian forces in 2005.

Since Salafism lacks formal organizational structures, its recruitment strategies are also different and are mostly built on informal channels. These committed young people connected to the movement via friends or family members, or by visiting the local mosque. The increasing numbers of Salafi satellite channels and websites also facilitate this process. Many more people from secular families came into contact with Salafism via *al-Nas* or *Iqra*ʾ channels and then began visiting Salafi scholars.

The third level of these networks contains the relationships between the *ʿulama* themselves. This level stretches from Lebanon to the Gulf countries and also to Europe. These relationships are usually established along ideological lines, but material opportunities also play a significant role. Both networks that I have identified in Northern Lebanon have strong relationships with the Gulf States, mainly with Kuwait, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. Sev-

eral ties connect them to wealthy individuals in the Gulf, who support them materially, or to charitable organizations, which can be regarded as the main sponsors of these networks. During my field trips to Kuwait and Qatar, I had the opportunity to investigate the relationship between Lebanese Salafis and these charities. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss how the Qatari-based, *haraki*-oriented Sheikh Eid Charity Organization developed its ties in Tripoli, and what kind of role it fulfils in the North Lebanese Salafi movement.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE HARAKI NETWORKS

The life story of the main representative of the Lebanese Salafis in Qatar offers an excellent way to understand how Gulf charities work and to find out about their beneficiaries. Until mid-2010, Khalid Zaʿrur was responsible for foreign relations at Sheikh Eid Charity Organization, and the organization's support of Lebanese Salafis largely depended on his goodwill. I had the chance to interview him several times during my field trip to Doha in June 2010. Khaled Zaʿrur has had a typical Lebanese Salafi life in many aspects. In the first 20 years of his life, he lived a secular lifestyle, working as a merchant in Tripoli. As he recalled, he enjoyed Arabic and modern Western music (which is regarded as *haram* in Salafism). For a time, he was even a member of a local band. He also recounted that his wife, who now wears the *ʿabaya* and *burqaʿ*, never used to cover her hair in the 1980s; in fact, he took her to the hairdresser and the beauty salon every week.

Khaled Zaʿrur's life changed radically after the Israeli invasion in the mid-1980s. His younger brother, who lived a pious lifestyle, was spending *ʿAid al-Fitr* on Aranib Island, close to the shores of Tripoli. An Israeli ship thought that he and his companions were leftist guerrillas and opened fire on them, killing him and 15 others. After losing his brother, Khaled Zaʿrur joined a leftist group to take revenge on the Israelis. As he recalled, their group was led by a Christian, and they planned to blow up an Israeli warship. Before executing this plan, however, somebody from al-Ahbash approached him and convinced him to focus on religion instead of participating in an unorganized, random act of warfare. As he recounted, "this person asked me: When did you pray, when did you fast last time? When I answered that I never had prayed in my life, he told me: Then do you want to die like that? You are not going to be a martyr but will burn in Hell instead". After this, he gave up his ambitions to participate in the war against Israel and joined

al-Ahbash to devote himself to religion. According to him, at that time, al-Ahbash "were hunting" well-off people like himself to fulfil their aspirations to dominate the Sunni scene in Lebanon. However, Khaled Zaʿrur was not satisfied with al-Ahbash's approach toward religion. As he told me, he was never able to accept Sufi superstitions and the "worship of the leader of the movement" (ʿAbdullah al-Harari). One of his remarks was that, "the Sufi is proud of his ignorance" (*yatafakhkhar bi-jahlihi*). Therefore, he left the movement and joined Tabligh, an Islamic missionary movement originating from India, which became influential during the Lebanese civil war. However, he left this group after a few months and joined the Muslim Brothers, since "they were living in the reality": as he put it, "They did not focus only on prayer but were concerned with actual social and political problems. The Ikhwan were talking about Jihad and Western imperialism that preoccupied the minds of the youth at that time". However, according to Khaled Zaʿrur, the Muslim Brothers cared too little about correct belief, and he was therefore unconvinced by their arguments. He finally became a Salafi when he met a famous Lebanese *daʿi*, Sheikh Nur al-Din ʿAmmar, in 1988. This man convinced him that Muslims could gain the blessing of God to solve their worldly problems if they followed the proper *ʿaqida* and if their beliefs were pure of innovation (*bidaʿ*). As he recounted, God assured him that he had made the right choice: "Although I never studied anything and never had any profession after my conversion [*iltizam*], I was working always as a boss [*mudir*]". After a period spent in Yemen working for an electronics company, he returned to Lebanon and opened a restaurant. At the same time, he joined Daʿi al-Islam al-Shahhal and became chief editor of the radio channel, Izaʿat al-Qur'an.

Another turning point in his life occurred when hundreds of Salafis were arrested after the battle between the Lebanese Army and a militant Salafi group in the Dinniyeh region. He spent four months in prison without trial. When he was finally released, he lost all of his wealth, since the restaurant was forced to close. He left Lebanon for Qatar, where he had already agreed to open a chain of Lebanese restaurants. However, his partners withdrew from the contract due to his being an ex-convict. At that point, according to him, he landed on his feet because of "having the right belief" (i.e. belonging to Salafism). Due to his transnational *haraki* network in the Gulf, he was able to get a senior position in the Sheikh ʿAid Charity Organization as the person responsible for foreign relations. He spent ten years working for the organization, with impressive results. He opened and became chief of the organization's impressive branch in the city of al-Waqra. He led a campaign

to collect one million signatures to stop the Israeli excavations under the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. He also helped Lebanese Salafis acquire sponsorship from the Sheikh Eid Charity Organization, following the closure of Mu'assasat al-Haramayn.

I know of at least three recipients (individuals and institutions) of the organization's assistance in Lebanon, and all of them belong to the *haraki* faction of Salafism. One of them is the Hamza mosque, with its endowment under the supervision of the aforementioned Sheikh Zakariyya al-Masri. Sheikh Da'i al-Islam al-Shahhal received a sum to cover the expenses for his radio station and the newly established Lebanese Salafi satellite channel, *Sada al-Islam*. Sheikh Haitham al-Saʿid, one of the prominent Salafi preachers of the Nahr al-Barid Palestinian camp and a close associate of Sheikh Daʿi, is also supported by the Qatari organization. Some of my Lebanese Salafi informants also told me that the Sheikh Eid Organization maintains a huge network of religious schools, mosques, and Islamic missionaries.[10] This claim is supported by Khaled Zaʿrur, who told me that his organization supports *daʿis* around the world "who have the right way of thinking" [that is, who follow their ideological line-harakism].[11] He also told me that there are many such *daʿis* in Lebanon, particularly in the North. The organization usually covers the maintenance of the mosque, gives a fixed salary to the *daʿi* (which is around 400-600 USD) and transfers money to print books or distribute leaflets and booklets. Khaled Zaʿrur told me that the organization even tries to give a kind of organizational shape to Salafis in Middle Eastern countries where they have access. Everywhere a mediator is appointed who tries to optimize the effectiveness of the Salafis' activities. In Lebanon, this person is Rabiʿ Haddad, a former Maronite who converted to Islam and has since been an active member of the Salafi *daʿwa* worldwide. He is also the Lebanese chief of a loose elitist organization of mostly Salafi intellectuals, the Global Anti-Aggression Campaign (*al-Hamla al-ʿAlimiyya li-Muqawamat al-ʿAdwan*), which was formed in Qatar by one of the founding members of the Sheikh Eid Organization, Dr. ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Nuʿaymi.[12] The Global Anti-Aggression Campaign promulgates a typical *haraki* ideology. It was formed in 2008 to create an Islamist network to campaign against Western imperialism in the Muslim world. The main event that inspired the organization's founders was the Israeli excavations under the Aqsa mosque, which triggered worldwide protests. Since then, they have organized several conferences in the Middle East and Europe. The leaders of the Global Anti-Aggression Campaign also play mediating roles in conflict situations, such as in 2009 when they tried to mediate between the Somali government and the Islamist

opposition. In June 2010, I had an opportunity to visit Dr. ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Nuʿaymi in his office in Doha. He stressed his disagreement with the purist view of unconditional obedience towards the ruler and the condemning of any criticism of him. He referred to himself as a Sahwi and expressed sympathy for the Saudi *haraki*s.[13] While waiting for him, I also had the chance to have a conversation with his co-workers in the office – young people between the ages of 30 and 40. They expressed sympathy for Al-Qaeda's jihad in Afghanistan and Iraq. They said that they hoped that the West would be unable to bear the continuous jihadi attacks and the economic pressure from China and Russia, and that it would be forced to reach an agreement with Bin Laden and give up its aspirations to colonize the Muslim world. In that case, Europe and the US would be able to face China and Russia with the help of the Muslims. When I left the office, I was given some of their publications, including Sayyid Qutb's *Milestones* and works by famous *haraki* writers.

It is important to mention the Global Anti-Aggression Campaign, as many Lebanese haraki Salafis are members of the organization, mostly those who also have a close relationship with the Sheikh Eid Organization. This suggests the existence of a loose, global network of *haraki* intellectuals who regularly meet, exchange ideas and occasionally help each other to get material benefits to finance their own activism. Some of my informants even suggested that *haraki* Salafis get more funds from businessmen and merchants in the Gulf who are supportive of their ideas than from charity organizations.[14] Clearly, embeddedness in *haraki* networks can provide Lebanese Salafis with an opportunity to obtain more funds, although a more detailed discussion of this phenomenon would require extensive, multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork.

THE LINKS OF HARAKI NETWORKS TO EUROPE

The Lebanese *haraki* network also extends to various European countries. Three main European Salafi leaders have Lebanese backgrounds; all of them became Salafi in Tripoli in the group around Salim al-Shahhal and his son, Daʿi al-Islam. In order to better understand the connections between European Salafi networks and those centred in Lebanon and the Gulf countries, I carried out some additional fieldwork among a Salafi group in one of the main cities of the Netherlands as well as in Berlin.

The leader of the Dutch group began his life as an Islamic activist in al-Ahbash circles when he was a teenager, as had many other Lebanese Salafis.

After a short period, he left this Sufi-oriented group and became a Salafi, as the pupil of Sheikh Salim al-Shahhal. As he recounted, he was almost the stepson of Sheikh Salim. He spent several years in his house and was treated like the other children there. When he finished his secondary education in Tripoli, Sheikh Salim helped him obtain a scholarship to the Islamic University of Medina in Saudi Arabia, where he completed a Master's degree. After graduation, he became the imam of a mosque in the United Arab Emirates. He had to leave the country after several years because, as he explained, he did not belong among the government sheikhs (*mashayikh al-sulta*); in other words, because he was *haraki*. He is convinced that those *ʿulama* who follow the prescriptions of the faith and refuse to bow in front of the rulers are not welcome in the Gulf countries. He even accuses the government of the Emirates of supporting Sufis in order to weaken Salafi influence. When staying in the Emirates, however, the sheikh came into contact with some Dutch Salafis, who invited him to their country to lead their group.

In the Netherlands, the sheikh regards preserving the identity of Muslims as his main task. He wants to prevent them from becoming Westernized. He urges them not to see themselves as Europeans but instead stresses their membership in the global Islamic Community. At the same time, he urges Muslims in the Netherlands to vote in elections, preferably for Muslim candidates.

The sheikh is still in contact with Lebanese Salafis from the *haraki* network. He visits Tripoli from time to time, occasionally taking some of his students there to become acquainted with local Salafis. There is, however, no indication of any organized relationship between the Dutch Salafi group and the Lebanese network. The sheikh's visits may well reflect his wish to maintain contacts there as a precaution, just in case he has to leave Europe one day, as happened to Omar Bakri, Salim al-Rafiʿi, and Ra'id Hulayhil.

My interviews with the sheikh shed light on how his Lebanese origins influence his thinking and style of activism. On one occasion, we were talking extensively about how he perceives the importance of coming from the Sham (Greater Syria) and not, for example, from the Gulf. He explained that Lebanon gave him a kind of "transnational outlook" (*tafkir ʿalami*).[15] Historically, the region has always been a hub of trade routes and a meeting point between east and west. Migration and long voyages have formed part of the inhabitants' lives for thousands of years. Nowadays, large migrant communities originating from Lebanon or Syria can be found throughout the world. Families even urge their members to seek their fortune in Western countries, unlike in the Gulf States. In the latter region, according to my own

observations, ordinary people influenced by Salafism usually refuse opportunities to spend a certain period of time in a Western or North American country. They often express their fear that they might not find an appropriate environment there to live life fully according to *shariʿa*. As the sheikh told me, "ʿ*asabiyya* [here meaning kinship bonds] and racism prevents Salafi *daʿis* from the Gulf from coming to Western Europe. They are nothing without their tribes; often they do not have an independent personality. Although God created us to individually worship Him, they are nothing without their tribe".[16] This is why the sheikh thinks that *daʿis* from the Gulf issue thousands of *fatwas* for Western Muslims without ever leaving their hometowns. He also regards this as the main reason why most of the Salafi *daʿis* in the West come from Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan, or have Palestinian origins. As he explained, due to his Lebanese origins, he is able to bridge cultural differences with his mostly Moroccan constituency. "Moroccans have their own ʿ*asabiyya*, which is different from that of the Middle East. You have to find a way to talk to them – this is what somebody from the Gulf is unable to understand."[17]

According to the sheikh, another distinguishing feature of Shami Salafis is their different understanding of *al-wala' wa-l-bara'*. He argued that for many Salafis in the Gulf, this doctrine means an obligation to hate not only what is un-Islamic in religion but also to avoid and hate all non-Muslims and heretics. Even one of the greatest Salafi authorities, ʿAbd al-ʿAziz bin Baz, warned in many of his lectures against friendship with or positive feelings towards unbelievers.[18] The Dutch-Lebanese sheikh, however, believes that *al-wala' wa-l-bara'* means only the hatred of certain beliefs and actions of those who are not Muslims or who do not practise Islam properly, and this hatred should not be extended to their persons. "Muslim men are allowed to take Christian or Jewish wives. They marry them because they are affected by their beauty or thinking. So how could they hate them at the same time?"[19] The sheikh also thinks that Muslims can befriend non-Muslims because in this way, they may have a positive influence on them.

I discovered similar relationships in Berlin between the al-Nur mosque in Kreuzberg and Lebanese *haraki* networks. The founder of the local *haraki* Salafi group, Sheikh Salim al-Rafiʿi, had followed a similar trajectory to the aforementioned scholar in the Netherlands. Like him, Sheikh Salim also became a Salafi in Salim al-Shahhal's group, then later he graduated from the Islamic University of Medina. Due to his contacts in the Gulf, he was able to emigrate to Germany, where he founded one of the most important Salafi communities in the country. He subsequently had to leave the country, as

the German authorities withdrew his residence permit.[20] One of his pupils, a Lebanese Palestinian, became his successor.

While the German authorities regard the mosque as a source of radicalism, during my visit there in March 2010, I found it to be a relatively open environment. The mosque serves as a forum for the local Lebanese, Palestinian, and Syrian communities. While the management is Salafi, they also allow other groups to practise *daʿwa*. I met preachers from the Tabligh movement there who were on *khuruj* (a proselytizing tour) and were staying in the mosque for a few days. Sometimes the Salafi management even invited a rabbi to participate in a religious debate.

The preachers of the mosque also urge their followers to be politically active. They usually support candidates (not only Muslims) according to the *maslaha* (interest). The Palestinian sheikh told me that in the local elections, he had assisted with the campaign of a candidate who had promised a separate graveyard for Muslims.

Sheikh Salim al-Rafiʿi's person was idolized after his departure, and his books are sold in the mosque's bookstore. If local Salafis have a religious problem, they still seek advice from Sheikh Salim. Ordinary believers can call him on his mobile phone if they seek an answer to a question related to *shariʿa*.

THE STRUCTURE OF PURIST NETWORKS

The structure of the purist network in Northern Lebanon is somewhat similar. At the beginning of 2009, many of those *ʿulama* who are counted as representatives of the purist stream and receive support from the RIHS signed a memorandum of understanding in which they agreed on a number of basic tenets of the method of the *daʿwa* that they would follow. This event occurred after serious disagreements arose between purist Salafis regarding the agreement between Safwan al-Zaʿbi, the representative of Ihya' al-Turath in Tripoli, and Hizbullah. It is possible that this memorandum of understanding was suggested by Ihaya' al-Turath, an organization that – like the Sheikh Eid Organization – tries to create a loose network among its beneficiaries in Lebanon (and probably elsewhere). The main points of the agreement mirror the basic features of purist Salafism and can be regarded as the conditions for the RIHS's sponsorship. The agreement stresses the need to remain loyal to the Saudi Great *ʿulama* and forbids "mocking them" (which is a reference to some *harakis* who call some of the Great *ʿulama* the "*ʿulama* of menstrua-

tion" because of their lack of attention to political issues when lost in the detail of daily religious practice). The second main point is the call to create an Islamic society by peaceful *daʿwa* and to be patient regarding the injustices of the rulers. The agreement also forbids revolt against the rulers, even if they are not Muslim, and condemns the understanding of jihad propagated by militant groups. Instead, they call for peaceful coexistence with non-Muslims and respect for "the treaties and contracts made with Muslims and non-Muslims".[21] These points closely resemble the preferences of the RIHS, which I will discuss at length in the next chapter.

At the centre of this purist network we find Safwan al-Zaʿbi, who receives funds directly from the RIHS and distributes them among other individuals, endowments, and associations. Although he claims that his association, the Tripoli-based Waqf al-Turath al-Islami, operates independently from the Kuwaiti charity, according to a member of his own network, he is in fact the RIHS's executive in Lebanon. According to this individual, he spent a couple of years in Kuwait undergoing intensive ideological training.

Safwan al-Zaʿbi told me that his aim is to officially make Salafism one of the main Sunni streams in Lebanon. To this end, he negotiates extensively with Dar al-Fatwa to integrate Salafi institutions into the country's main Sunni body. The negotiations are being mediated by the government of Switzerland.[22] He hopes that by means of this process, "the cloud of suspicion [around Salafis] will be lifted". [23] The material advantage will be that Dar al-Fatwa will accredit the degrees conferred by Salafi educational institutions. He also hopes that he can open his private university, Jamiʿat al-Fiha, if these aspirations are met. His other plan is to spread Salafism by organizing official study groups in mosques, where the participants can receive *ijazas* accredited by Dar al-Fatwa. This will enable them to be officially recognized *ʿulama* and avoid being accused of being agents of a foreign ideology that is trying to destroy Lebanese society. In the long term, he hopes to marginalize the *haraki* stream in Tripoli, whose members he calls "inventors" (*mubtadiʿin*) and "hypocrites" (*munafiqin*). He thinks that they aim to destroy society, and that they are only viable if they use their sectarian rhetoric in times of political distress. Indeed, according to one of my informants, it is the RIHS's aim to weaken *haraki* influence worldwide. According to one of my informants, the Kuwaiti organization once contacted Daʿi al-Islam al-Shahhal and offered him 12,000 USD if he forbid ʿAidh al-Qarni, a famous Saudi *haraki* preacher, from lecturing on his radio station.

THE ROLE OF PATRONAGE

Salafis also use the Lebanese patronage system to mobilize resources to make their *daʿwa* more widespread. Historically, the Lebanese state has been weak, and the absence of state institutions has traditionally been filled by patronage networks. Belonging to such networks is crucial for average Lebanese individuals to get jobs and material benefits, or even to acquire sufficient resources to support their families. In Northern Lebanon, which is the most destitute region in the country both economically and socially, patronage networks probably thrive more than anywhere else. As I explained earlier, the *ʿulama* also form part of these patronage networks, and the Salafis are no exception. Salafis can benefit from the Lebanese (or more broadly, Middle Eastern) patronage system in two ways.

First, as mentioned above, they distribute certain amounts among their followers from the funds that they have acquired from charities or from individuals, in order to win or strengthen loyalty. For example, in Wadi Khalid, I witnessed how Salafis persuade people to follow them. What I now describe happened in December 2009 to Musa, a 26-year-old man and member of the family with which I was staying in the region. Musa has a degree in hotel management, and for a couple of years he used to work in Jounieh, a famous holiday resort between Beirut and Byblos. However, after his contract ended, he was unable to find a job due to the economic difficulties following the war in 2006. In this, he was like many other Lebanese young people with a sufficient education but without appropriate contacts. After waiting more than a year and unable to find any employment, he accepted an offer from Sheikh ʿIsa, a local Salafi preacher. Sheikh ʿIsa is a member of the same *ʿashira* (a sub-unit of the tribe) as Musa, and he is connected to the *haraki* network in Tripoli and to the Sheikh Eid Organization. One day when I was in Musa's house, Sheikh ʿIsa visited us and suggested that Musa take over the management of a traditional *foul-hummus* restaurant in Tripoli's Qubba district. The owner planned to go and work in the Gulf, and would entrust his restaurant to somebody and give 50% of the profits to him. The owner was a committed Salafi and wanted a similar person to take over his enterprise. Musa, however, was not such a person. He resembled the average Lebanese young man who admires Western culture, likes wearing fashionable jeans, and listens to famous Lebanese pop singers such as George Wassuf and Nancy Ajram. Sheikh ʿIsa suggested that he change his lifestyle, pray five times a day, grow his beard, and wear Islamic clothes more often, or, as he expressed it in Arabic, *yaltazim* (become committed). After some discussion, Musa finally

agreed, although he said that he would not able to quit smoking immediately. My departure from the country prevented me from following his story, but I think that this incident offers a good illustration of the relationship between Salafism and patronage.

Salafis in Tripoli also build contacts with powerful political patrons. These latter individuals distribute material benefits to those who can recruit voters for them in elections. Salafi preachers are usually useful for such purposes. I mentioned above that some *ʿulama* even declared it a religious obligation for Muslims to vote for Saʿad al-Hariri's list in the 2009 parliamentary elections. According to some sources, votes mobilized by Tripoli's Salafis in 2005 played a crucial role in the Future Movement scoring a landslide victory.[24] Safwan al-Zaʿbi has tried to strengthen his position in Tripoli by mobilizing loyal individuals to vote for his list. In 2009, this list included two majority and two opposition candidates. As al-Zaʿbi admitted, in this way he avoids committing to either party but receives funding from both of them. In 2009, he was able to mobilize approximately 1,500 voters;[25] not a significant number if we realize that there are around 180,000 registered voters in Tripoli, but certainly significant in a case of parity between the two camps.

THE ROLE OF SALAFI TV CHANNELS

Salafi discourse not only reaches people in mosques or via personal contacts; modern media also play a significant role. Over the last decade, Salafi Internet sites, radio stations, and TV channels have proliferated. Lebanese Salafis have one radio and one satellite TV channel, as mentioned above, but these are still in an early stage of development. Their coverage cannot reach the majority of the Sunni population. Transnational Salafi satellite channels, however, make a significant contribution to the *daʿwa* in Lebanon.

These channels are easily accessible since they are broadcast from NileSat, which covers the entire Middle East. Most of them are based in Egypt but are owned or sponsored by individuals in the Gulf. NileSat carries 12 channels; the most popular is al-Rahma, which employs the three celebrated Egyptian Salafi preachers Muhammad Hasan, Muhammad Yaqub, and Abu Ishaq al-Huwayni. All three are excellent preachers and popular throughout the Middle East, even among the less conservative, more secularized segments of society. In Lebanon, there used to be a huge vacuum in Sunni religious broadcasting, while the Shiʿites had Hizbullah's al-Manar channel, and the Christians could choose between several religious channels broadcast from

Lebanon. In the first decade of the 21st century, the appearance of Sunni religious programmes – first on secular, popular satellite channels and then on exclusively Sunni Islamic channels such as al-Risala, al-Rahma, and al-Nas – immediately drew the attention of Lebanon's Sunni population.

According to Field and Hamam, Salafi channels are popular because Arab governments allow them to broadcast more than other Islamic movements. The reason for this is that Salafi TV programmes never touch on political issues and never criticize a regime openly, which cannot be said of the Muslim Brothers.[26] This may, however, only be part of the explanation. Aside from the fact that the design and the quality of the programmes are excellent, their approach is unique. They mostly deal with contemporary social problems and suggest that they can be solved with correct religious practice. The sheikhs answer questions about how to behave or act in certain situations with detailed explanations, citing verses of the Qur'an and *ahadith*.

Many Lebanese Salafi sheikhs told me that interest in Salafism began increasing when these channels started broadcasting in 2006. People became more interested in Salafi religious practice and began visiting Salafi mosques in larger numbers. Some committed Salafis recall that they heard about Salafism for the first time while watching these channels rather than contacting the *ʿulama*. Although I did not have time to further investigate the impact of Egyptian Salafi channels, I believe that extensive fieldwork on this issue could provide interesting results. It would be interesting to find out, for instance, whether the increasing popularity of these channels has contributed to the decline of Sufism in the country.

Thus, it can be concluded that there are three main types of recruitment for the Salafi movement in Northern Lebanon. The first is recruitment via family and friendship bonds; the second is patronage that offers economic incentives to those who visit Salafi mosques or adopt a Salafi lifestyle; and the third is related to the emergence and increasing popularity of Salafi satellite channels.

5

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSNATIONAL ISLAMIC CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

The Case of the Jama'iyyat Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami

THE EMERGENCE OF TRANSNATIONAL ISLAMIC CHARITIES

In Islam, the concept of charity is as old as the religion itself. The Qur'an and the prophetic tradition contain many references to alms-giving and helping the poor. However, the emergence of religious charitable organizations in the Islamic world is a modern phenomenon. To understand their development, I will provide a short overview of the geopolitical developments in the Middle East that led to the emergence and increasing importance of these organizations.

Independent religious charitable institutions have existed since the early centuries of Islam and did not disappear with the emergence of the modern state. Charity was traditionally financed by obligatory alms-giving, or *zakat*, and voluntary payments, or *sadaqa*. *Zakat* has to be paid on 2.5% of an individual's surplus property. (Muslim jurists disagree about which type of property is subject to the obligation to pay *zakat*, but most of them agree on real estate, gold, silver, and commercial assets.) *Zakat* can only be given for charitable purposes. The categories of legitimate recipients of *zakat* are listed in the Qur'an in the so-called *ayat al-sadaqa* (verses of almsgiving, 9:60). These beneficiaries can be the needy (*fuqara'*), the extremely poor (*masakin*), those who collect *zakat*, potential converts, captives (to pay their ransoms), those who are participating in jihad, and travellers.[1] *Zakat* is considered to be part of worship. Giving part of one's property to the needy results in spiritual purification. According to most religious scholars, the prayer of an individual is not accepted if he or she does not pay *zakat*. In modern times, there are two methods of payment for *zakat*. In some Muslim countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Kuwait, and Pakistan, *zakat* is collected by the state and is obligatory. However, the majority of Muslims pay *zakat* outside of the compulsory legal scheme for collection and distribution. Their payment is usually received by charitable endowments and organizations.

The concept of charitable endowment, or *waqf* (pl. *awqaf*), has also been present in Islam since the earliest times. An endowment is created when an individual gives up part of his or her property for charitable purposes. The *waqf* is not mentioned in the Qur'an, but there is evidence in the prophetic tradition that has been used by scholars to elaborate its rules. These endowments are usually used to maintain mosques, roads, schools, hospitals, and orphanages. After the Second World War, the governments of some Arab countries, including Egypt and Tunisia, tried to take control of *awqaf*, arguing that the current form of such endowments resulted from religious reasoning (*ijtihad*) and that they were therefore subject to state review. However, in most Muslim countries, *awqaf* remains beyond the control of the authorities and serves as a base for self-organized charitable networks.

The traditional institutions of Islamic charity have not disappeared, because most emerging states in the Middle East and North Africa have not been able to provide sufficient services for their populations. People therefore establish charitable endowments to fulfil their needs at the local level.[2] As we will see, these local institutions are the main beneficiaries of transnational charitable organizations. Or, to put it the other way round, these originally local organizations form the main elements of the transnational charitable networks.

The main factor that led to the establishment of transnational charitable organizations was the emergence of the oil-rich Gulf monarchies, mainly Saudi Arabia, as the main proponents of transnational Salafism. There are three series of events – the Arab Cold War, the Iranian Revolution, and the Afghan War – lying behind this phenomenon that I will now briefly describe.

The first so-called Arab Cold War between Egypt and Saudi Arabia lasted from the mid-1950s to 1970. In 1952, a military coup abolished the pro-Western monarchy in Egypt. The new regime, led by President Gamal ʿAbd al-Nasir, adopted Arab nationalism as its main ideology and allied itself with the Soviet Union. Cairo also began to support secular Arab nationalist movements worldwide. In the two decades following the revolution in Egypt, Arab nationalist regimes came to power in a number of Arab countries. In 1958, a *coup d'état* abolished the pro-Western monarchy in Iraq, and in 1962 an Arab nationalist government came to power in post-independence Algeria. Equally important were the Syrian and the Libyan "revolutions" in 1963 and 1969. The spread of the new ideology endangered the very existence of the traditional, kinship-based Saudi monarchy. In response to the threat, Riyadh (in addition to seeking the protection of the US) tried to boost its own legitimacy by using the symbolic importance of the kingdom's geographical loca-

tion – that is, by controlling the holy cities of Mecca and Medina – and supporting Islamic education and religious revival in other Muslim countries. To this end, the Saudi government supported the establishment of Islamic charitable organizations. At the time, the most important of these was the Muslim World League, founded in 1962.

The end of the decade brought the consolidation of Saudi hegemony in the Arab state system. After its defeat in the 1967 war and the death of Nasser in 1970, Egypt lost its leading role in the Middle East. This process was completed when, after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, the price of oil quadrupled, transforming Saudi Arabia into the world's richest oil producer. When in 1974 the kingdom's economy became 14 times larger than before the oil boom, it seemed that Riyadh had won the contest with Egypt and other Arab nationalist states, and that the Gulf had become the new centre of the Arab world.

However, Saudi Arabia was not able to enjoy its victory in the Arab Cold War for long. The Iranian Revolution, which brought down the pro-Western monarch Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, brought a new existential threat to the Saudi kingdom. In 1979, the Shiʿite religious elite came to power in Tehran, led by the senior cleric Ruhollah Khomeini. The new establishment questioned the legitimacy of authoritarian governments that, in their view, were serving the interests of the competing superpowers rather than Islam. The Iranian clerics showed a strong desire to export the Islamic revolution and its ideology abroad, mainly to other states in the region. Not only the Shiʿa were affected by the success of Iranian Islamists in abolishing a secular monarchy and creating a regime based on *shariʿa*; Sunni Islamists also became enthusiastic about the possibility of creating an Islamic system. This presented an existential challenge to Saudi Arabia and its legitimacy based on Islam. The situation was no less dangerous for other regimes in the Gulf where Islamist movements were strong. Therefore, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan came at the best possible time for the Gulf countries to compete with Tehran's religious expansion. By labelling the Afghan War as jihad and supporting the *mujahidin* against the Red Army, these states intended to present themselves as champions of the Islamic cause. Besides sending thousands of volunteers to fight side-by-side with the locals, the Gulf States sent billions of dollars to support the resistance. To channel the financial support of governments and individuals, dozens of charitable organizations were established. The Afghan War and the vast amounts that were sacrificed for supporting the *mujahidin* led to a boom in transnational Islamic charitable activity.

However, we should note that only some of these charitable organizations adopted Salafi ideology. Many of them were in the hands of the Muslim

Brothers who had much more experience, as charity work had been one of their most important activities since the establishment of the movement. In fact, charitable organizations that were clearly promoting Salafi ideology only began to be established at the beginning of the 1980s, when Saudi Arabia began to spread Salafism as a counter-ideology to revolutionary Islamism, be it Shiʿite or Sunni.[3]

Until the 1980s, the Salafi message spread beyond the Saudi Kingdom via informal networks. *Daʿis* gathered students around themselves or were able to preach in mosques. Any type of organization labelled *bidʿa* (innovation) was clearly forbidden to them, since modern organizational forms had not existed at the time of the Prophet. Therefore, there was no legal statement by senior Salafi *ʿulama* regarding the establishment and organization of Islamic charities in modern times. When the Saudi Kingdom intended to spread the Salafi message globally to achieve a form of dominance based on its religious legitimacy, it demanded that the senior Salafi *ʿulama* change their attitude and issue *fatwas* legalizing charitable institutions. In addition, many religious scholars following the Salafi creed but influenced by other Islamist currents no longer thought that all organizational forms were unacceptable. In the 1980s, the Saudi senior *ʿulama* began issuing a series of *fatwas* regarding charity work. According to ʿAbdulaziz bin Baz, the late grand mufti of Saudi Arabia, the establishment of charitable institutions is allowed if they are based on the *shariʿa* and to the extent that they help poor people or victims, and spread the *daʿwa*. In his *fatwa*, Bin Baz rules that charitable organizations have no legitimate function apart from the collection of *zakat* and *sadaqa* and their redistribution among legitimate recipients. However, he regards it as un-Islamic for a charitable institution to belong to a movement or political organization, since it encourages *hizbiyya* (partisanship) and shatters the unity of the *umma*. In fact, whether a relief organization is truly Islamic and acts according to *shariʿa* remains a key issue of debate among Salafis today.

THE EMERGENCE OF SALAFISM IN KUWAIT

The Revival of Islamic Heritage Society of Kuwait (Jamaʿiyat Ihyaʾ al-Turath al-Islami, in the following abbreviated to Ihyaʾ al-Turath) is present in as many as 50 countries and finances impressive charity, education, and *daʿwa* (proselytization) projects. The organization is considered one of the main bankrollers of the Salafi movement worldwide and has played a crucial role in

spreading the Salafi message in Indonesia, Yemen, Lebanon, and the Balkans (mainly in Kosovo and Bosnia). In the following paragraphs, I will explain how Ihya' al-Turath was established after the expansion of Salafism in Kuwait and examine the factors which helped it to become one of the most important Islamic charitable organizations in the world. In order to understand this process, I will first briefly describe the political and social environment of Kuwait, followed by the emergence of the Salafi movement in the country.

The small emirate is unique in the region in many ways. Its social and political system differs from that of other states in the Arabian Peninsula. Although Kuwait is a hereditary monarchy, the ruling family has never been able to gain absolute dominance over every field of politics, and the emir has always shared his power with influential elements in society. The founding myth of the state reflects its participatory origins. According to the myth, Kuwait was founded in the eighteenth century by a group of nomads escaping a prolonged drought in the Arabian interior. After settling in an oasis near the sea, they had to decide how they would run their newly established community. The question of rule had to be settled by the three most powerful families. The heads of the two wealthiest among them refused to fulfil the position of ruler, since then the families would be unable to fully concentrate their efforts on trade. Therefore, they elected the poorest clan, the current royal family al-Sabah, to handle the state's political affairs.[4] This story reflects a kind of social contract between the rulers and the ruled that binds the hand of the former. In fact, throughout Kuwait's history, powerful merchant families have had a significant stake in ruling the country. From the beginning, a *shura* (council) functioned in which the heads of the merchant families sat with the emir to discuss political issues. From these foundations, a constitutional monarchy emerged in the twentieth century, that was unique in the Arab world, with a functioning and freely elected parliament and free press – the only state in the region that compares to Lebanon.

Due to this arrangement, control over society has been limited, and unlike in other Gulf monarchies, the flow of ideas and ideologies has been relatively free. None of the religious communities in Kuwait faced official discrimination, not even the large Shiʿite community (which made up at least one-third of the population).[5]

This made it possible for Islamism to emerge as one of the Islamic streams from a relatively early period and to be peacefully accommodated in the social and political system. The first Islamist movements were the Muslim Brothers, Hizb al-Tahrir, and the Tabligh. Of these, only the Muslim Brothers were able to gain political influence, since the members of the latter two mainly

belonged to immigrant communities (the members of Hizb al-Tahrir were mainly Palestinians, while the Tablighis were Pakistanis).[6]

Although according to some accounts, the Salafi message arrived in Kuwait at the beginning of the twentieth century from Saudi Arabia via tribal contacts and also via Saudi sheikhs who visited the country intermittently, the movement was unable to gain a foothold until the 1960s. At this time, a handful of *Salafi daʿis* (preachers) settled in the country to transmit what was, according to them, the "pure form of Islam". The three most famous among them were the Egyptian ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Khaliq, the Palestinian ʿAbdullah Sebt, and the Saudi ʿUmar al-Ashqar. According to an account by one of the first students of ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Khaliq, the *Salafi daʿwa* began in an informal way at the beginning of the 1960s:

> In the beginning we, a few dozen Salafis, only made excursions every night to the beach where we sat around the sheikh and took courses on the Qur'an and Sunna. At this stage we never touched political or even social issues that went beyond personal, religious behaviour. When our numbers became larger, we were able to have our study groups in mosques, until three mosques were entirely Salafi. The continuous arrival of migrant workers definitely increased our numbers. Many Egyptians attended our study groups.[7]

The movement's first organization was the Dar al-Salafi (Salafi House), where the members were able to handle issues in a more official way. These, however, were restricted to collecting *zakat* and voluntary donations (*sadaqa*). As Sheikh ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Khaliq remembers, in the first years of the *daʿwa,* the number of Salafis was still limited:

> At this time, Kuwait lived in the euphoria of the oil boom and the government provided people with every type of service for free or at a ridiculously cheap price. People were preoccupied with material goods and did not have many concerns about religion. Among the youth, the nationalist, anti-religion way of thinking was popular. When I first arrived in Kuwait, I was surprised to see that only old people visited the mosques.[8]

In fact, three important factors played a crucial role in the expansion of the Salafi movement in Kuwait. The first was the 1967 war and the catastrophic military defeat of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan by Israel. After this event, everywhere, "the attraction of Arab nationalism and socialism, dominant in 1967, has declined dramatically, while revivalist Islamism has risen".[9] After this

war, for the first time, Arabs blamed themselves, not colonialism, for their defeat. Islamists were generally able to exploit this situation by arguing "that the war was punishment for misplaced trust in the promise of alien ideologies that had been fostered as a means of mobilizing for modernization and development. The defeat was devastating because the margin of deviance from the faith was great".[10] The situation in Kuwait was no different. Until the end of the 1960s, the various Arab nationalist movements, mainly the Nasserists, enjoyed overwhelming popularity among the people. However, after the 1967 war, their reputation rapidly declined, and the vacuum was filled by an increase in religiosity and, naturally, by the Islamists, at this time dominated by the Muslim Brothers. As people I interviewed for my fieldwork in Kuwait recalled, in the years following the war, mosques that used to be empty even at the time of Friday prayers filled up with young people who had previously attended Nasserist gatherings or Communist organizations. Many people suddenly changed their lifestyles. Those who had followed a Western lifestyle stopped shaving their beards. The main beneficiaries of this upheaval were, of course, the Muslim Brothers, who had been present in the country for almost two decades and were able to build up their organizational infrastructure. The state also helped them by every possible means, since it saw Arab nationalism as a serious threat, especially because of the enmity between Nasser and the traditional pro-Western monarchies. The Egyptian president's hostility grew in particular after Algerian independence in 1962, when colonialism ceased to be the direct enemy. "Nasir had to find new targets, new 'others'. So Arab nationalist fury was turned against Arab countries that Nasir deemed to be 'reactionary'".[11]

In a more limited way, the Salafis were also able to take advantage of the religious upheaval due to the fact that they already controlled several mosques and had direct access to young people who had recently turned to religion. The other effective means of transmitting the message was being present at *diwaniyya*s, the traditional Kuwaiti men's gatherings. According to Kuwaitis, *diwaniyya*s have been organized since the founding years of the country and can be traced back to old tribal traditions. The *diwaniyya* is usually hosted by the head of a prominent Kuwaiti family every week on a given day (usually Tuesday or Saturday). Around nine o'clock at night, men – usually members of the extended family, friends, clients of the host, or those who wish to discuss something with him – gather in a specific place in a Kuwaiti house that has been created for *diwaniyahs*. The people sit back against the wall surrounding the large place on the right and the left side of the host. A Pakistani or Egyptian servant offers them drinks, usually tea or Arabic coffee.

The discussions in the *diwaniyya*s cover a range of issues. Sometimes people gather at a *diwaniyya* only to socialize and talk about everyday issues, or to watch an important football match. *Diwaniyya*s for poetry are also popular. More important are those *diwaniyya*s where people discuss economic or political issues. At such gatherings (rather than in the offices of Kuwait City's skyscrapers), the fate of millions of dollars can be decided. At election time, *diwaniyahs* can be extremely crowded, as key campaigning takes place there. Usually the time and place of a *diwaniyya* is advertised online, indicating the social importance of such events.[12]

When members of significant Kuwaiti families became sympathetic to Salafism, the *da'is* were able to access these *diwaniyya*s and share their teaching with other attendants. Usually, they are invited weekly, or every other week, to give lectures and hold study groups on the Qur'an or Hadith.[13] Most Salafis acknowledge the role that *diwaniyahs* play in spreading the Salafi message in the country.

The real breakthrough – and this is the second factor – for Salafis relates to an internal and an external development. At the beginning of the 1970s, Salafis were able to recruit followers among the influential merchant class. Khalid Sultan, the former leader of the Salafi parliamentary faction, was among them.[14] This also opened the way for them to become part of Kuwait's political map in the long term. In the pre-oil era, the rulers of Kuwait traditionally shared power with the merchant class. This is because the emirs were financially largely dependent on the merchants, who dominated large segments of the population and whose livelihoods were based on trade and pearl diving, and were able to extract revenues from them. However, after the discovery of oil, the power balance changed in favour of the rulers. They no longer had to rely on the merchants' revenues and were therefore largely able to exclude the latter from decision-making. Unlike the other Gulf States, in Kuwait, however, the ruler did not enjoy absolute dominance, and though the merchants lost most of their political power, they still constituted an influential segment of the population. They continuously sought new opportunities to regain their former influence, and therefore supported political and social movements. At the end of the 1970s, many scions of influential merchant families became followers of Salafism. This enabled the movement to gain a presence in the financial and trading sector and thereby receive more funding than before. Since the merchants were interested in social and political issues, the voices that became stronger in the Salafi movement were those that were interested in the implementation of religious rulings in public life. As one of my informants explained to me, at this time, the Salafis

began involving themselves in more worldly debates[15] concerning politics and society. Some of the Salafis joined the Muslim Brotherhood's organization, the Social Reform Society (Jama'iyyat al-Islah al-Ijtima'i), and worked with them. Others remained relatively independent and criticized the Muslim Brothers. According to some accounts, in the 1970s, a "war of ideas" (*harb afkar*) took place between the Muslim Brothers and the Salafis in the *diwaniyahs*, mosques, public gatherings, and the media, which became accessible to Salafis after they had gained sympathizers within the merchant class.[16]

The third factor is the geopolitical change in the region, which favoured the Salafis. The Iranian Revolution of 1979 posed a severe threat to the very existence of the Kuwaiti state. Beside the military threat that came from Tehran, Khomeini's Islamist regime intended to spread the revolution among the Shiʿite communities of the Gulf. Shiʿite militant cells in Kuwait committed several terrorist attacks during the 1980s. In addition, the fact that Islamists were able to come to power and establish a regime based on *shariʿa* gave the Muslim Brotherhood in countries with Sunni majorities a new confidence that their project could also be implemented. The Kuwaiti ruling family was truly frightened by the prospect of being overthrown by the Islamists. Therefore, to divide the Sunnis, the state began supporting the Salafi movement against the Muslim Brothers, as it had supported the latter at the end of the 1960s against the Nasserists. A further reason for helping the Salafis against the Muslim Brothers was the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War. While financing Saddam Hussein's expensive military adventure, the government needed a form of Islamic legitimacy.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF JAMA'IYYAT IHYA' AL-TURATH AL-ISLAMI AND ITS DEVELOPMENT PRIOR TO THE SECOND GULF WAR

By the beginning of the 1980s, the Salafi movement in Kuwait had achieved an unprecedented level of organizational development. While many aspects of the movement's organizational strategy retained an informal character, Salafis gained a strong presence in labour organizations and student unions, where they competed with the Muslim Brothers. As the next stage in their organizational development, the Salafis of Kuwait established Jama'iyyat Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami (the Revival of Islamic Heritage Society, or RIHS). The society was founded in 1981 with the support of the Kuwaiti state and wealthy merchants who had adopted Salafi ideology. Although according to its founding documents, Ihya' al-Turath was created for charitable purposes,

from the beginning it covered a wider range of tasks. In the 1980s the society served as an umbrella organization for Kuwait's Salafis and provided the institutional framework for engaging in the political process. In 1981, for the first time in the world, Salafis were nominated for parliamentary elections. At this time, Salafis elsewhere in the world did not support any kind of political participation in secular and parliamentary regimes, since they were heavily influenced by the Saudi religious line which abstained from any serious political involvement aside from legitimizing the autocratic rule of the royal family. Most Kuwaiti Salafis, however, took a different stance due to the revolutionary ideology propagated by their main religious authority, ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Khaliq. It is necessary to briefly discuss his thought, since the debates on his ideas played a crucial role in the development of Ihyaʾ al-Turath. Unlike purist Salafis, the majority of the writings of Sheikh ʿAbd al-Rahman are related to politics. In the second half of the 1970s, he began publishing weekly in *al-Watan*, one of the biggest Kuwaiti dailies, mainly on contemporary political affairs. In one of his articles, he argues that politics and human development are more important than mere religious practice. According to him, Islam is a total system; politics forms a part of this system and cannot be neglected.

Sheikh ʿAbd al-Rahman criticizes the purists' argument that the Prophet did not practise politics in the first Meccan period. According to him, this claim is false, because politics is not only about governing a state:

> The Prophet from the first day of his *daʿwa* intended to apply a different dogma from the dominant worldview and wanted to gather people around this dogma … The Prophet also created a secret society [when the Muslims were oppressed in Mecca], a society that worked publicly to change the social system. He used every available media, like personal conversations, sermons … the media war against the belief of the *Jahiliyya*, and all of this is politics.[17]

ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Khaliq thinks that the purist stance on politics only serves the enemies of Islam who destroyed the Caliphate and then established weak rulers in Muslim countries in order to safeguard the interests of the West. These rulers refuse to govern according to Islam; therefore, the purists who legitimize their rule are serving the enemies of their religion.

Unlike the purists, he also justifies the establishment of political parties on the grounds that they can raise the flag of Islam, and there is no evidence in the text that prohibits such organizations. He thinks that parties are effective tools of *daʿwa* in a democratic system and that it is in the interest of

Muslims to preserve this system, since the alternative is military dictatorship. Many purists regard other types of associations such as charitable organizations as *bidʿa* (invention) and therefore prohibited. However, according to Sheikh ʿAbd al-Rahman, such associations existed at the time of the Prophet. He mentions the case of Muslims who fled to Ethiopia to escape the repression of the Meccans. Since the Muslims lived in a minority in a predominantly Christian country, they forged close ties with each other and established an association (*jamaʿiyya*) led by one of the Companions, Jaʿfar bin Abi Talib.

IHYA' AL-TURATH AFTER THE LIBERATION OF KUWAIT

While the Salafi movement was quite united until 1990 under the umbrella of Ihya' al-Turath, after the liberation of Kuwait from the Iraqi occupation, this was no longer the case. The schism occurred due to debates within the Salafi movement that had begun in Saudi Arabia in the 1970s, but these debates intensified during the occupation of Kuwait and the ensuing foreign involvement in the conflict. While the so-called Great *ʿUlama* (Kibar al-ʿUlama) and Salafis holding more purist views regarded the US-led intervention as legitimate, those who are known commonly as *Harakiyun* (activist Salafis) or *Sahwiyun* (revivalists) criticized the Saudi and the Kuwaiti governments for accepting military aid from non-Muslim countries and allowing non-Muslim soldiers to enter the Arabian Peninsula.[18] However, the ideological split was deeper and concerned more general ideas about Islam and Salafism. Since the meaning of Sahwi and Purist is explained elsewhere, in the following paragraphs I will only briefly summarize these perspectives.

According to Madawi Al-Rasheed, "Sahwi thought is a hybrid tradition that rediscovered the revolutionary potential of Wahhabi religiopolitical discourse and rearticulated it in a modern language accessible to all".[19] The *Sahwi* or *haraki* trend developed from purist Salafism in Saudi Arabia as a result of the introduction of modern education and the influence of Islamists, mainly Muslim Brothers, who had taken refuge in the country in the 1950s and 1960s. Purist Salafis regard Islam as a set of *ʿIbadat* (religious practices) and believe that politics should be left to those who are better acquainted with the people's interests (*ʿalam bi-l-maslaha*). Therefore, they do not regard it as permissible to become involved in politics or openly criticize the ruler, since this can cause *fitna* (in this case, division among Muslims). Such activities can only take place secretly within a group of respected religious scholars.

Sahwis, however, take an entirely different view. They, like the majority of Islamists, see Islam as a total system (*shumuliyat al-Islam*), and believe that politics is part of religion. They reject the concept of a religious scholar (*rijal al-din*) and believe that everybody must know his religion and have an equal right to openly criticize the ruler and express his own political views as part of *hisba*. According to purists, Islam is the proclamation of "no god but God and Mohammed is his prophet". Therefore, the main necessity these days is not the creation of an Islamic state but the purification of religion from *shirk*. Sahwis believe the correctness of ritual is not enough; in addition, Muslims have to actively participate in their community's political life and work to ensure the application of Islamic rules (*tahkim al-shara'*) to every aspect of life. In short, Sahwis regard the *umma* as a political community in which everyone has to play his part. Since Sahwis strongly criticized the legitimacy of the ruling family in Riyadh, the government looked for loyal scholars who were educated and respected enough to contest the *harakis*. They chose an ultra-purist trend, led by Sheikh Rabi' al-Madkhali, which drew upon the heritage of purist communities established by al-Albani in the 1970s. Madkhali is known for his radical criticism of Islamist movements, Sahwis, and everybody who does not follow his narrow concept of Islam.

During the Gulf War, most Kuwaiti Salafis escaped to Saudi Arabia, where they rapidly began to play active parts in these debates as a result of family and tribal lines, which connect the societies of the two countries. In the 1990s, the Kuwait Salafi community split along *haraki* and purist lines. This schism, in turn, had an impact on Ihya' al-Turath. Until that time, the organization had been under the unquestionable influence of Sheikh ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Khaliq. This prominent religious scholar with clear political views, a former sympathizer with the Egyptian Muslim Brothers, was one of the few pioneers of *haraki* Salafism, along with the Syrian Sheikh Mohammed Surur Zayn al-'Abidin. In fact, most of his writings cover political issues. In the first half of the 1990s, ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Khaliq was suddenly ousted from Ihya' al-Turath, and the organization's publications and ideological direction changed radically. It is very difficult to get detailed information about the background to this development. When I asked Ihya' al-Turath members about it, they usually refused to give me detailed answers. I happened to come into contact with one of the members of the Kuwaiti Muslim Brotherhood, however, and he seemed willing to share information with me. According to him, a purist stream gained control over Ihya' al-Turath, led by Sheikh ʿAbdullah Sebt, a former student of Sheikh Rabi' al-Madkhali. According to my informant, the purists were given intensive state support,

since the ruling family no longer trusted ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Khaliq and his followers. There were two reasons for this. First, Sheikh ʿAbd al-Rahman personally sympathized with Saddam Hussein prior to the invasion due to the latter's persecution of the Shiʿites. Second, the Kuwaiti state saw the *haraki* Salafis as a danger because of their ambiguous stance towards Arab rulers and their nostalgia regarding the Caliphate.

My Muslim Brother informant put me in contact with a senior journalist at Ihya' al-Turath's magazine *al-Furqan,* who provided me with some valuable resources on the theological disputes that subsequently led to Sheikh ʿAbd al-Rahman's departure from the organization. Sheikh ʿAbdullah Sebt attacked one of the books written by ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Khaliq, *al-Sirat*, in which the latter describes *tawhid al-hukm* (oneness of governance) as an integral part of the pillars of *tawhid*.[20] As ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Khaliq puts it, "Unifying the *hakimiyya* of God Almighty means that we believe that he is the only one who has the right to govern and he is the source of the law for who love him and accept [his *shariʿa*]. As God told [in the Qur'an], there is no governance except for God (*la hukum illa li-llah*)".[21] Purist Salafis interpreted this as the application of Sayyid Qutb's concept of *hakimiyya* in a Salafi context.[22] According to Qutb, the government should be based on the sovereignty of God, which means that the legal system must be entirely based on *shariʿa*. Then the rulers must rule justly and must be chosen by the ruled, who must then obey them. However, this obedience is based on the ruler's obedience to God.[23] Therefore, ʿAbdullah Sebt accused ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Khaliq of making a covert call for a revolt against the ruler (*khuruj*) and called him a Khariji, after a sectarian movement in early Islam. The Khawarij (plural of Khariji) had revolted against the fourth Caliph, 'Ali bib Abi Talib, when the latter agreed to settle his dispute with the governor of Damascus, Mu'awiya bin Abi Sufyan, by arbitration. Mu'awiya accused 'Ali of hiding the murderers of the third Caliph, 'Uthman bin 'Affan – who was Mu'awiya's relative – and claimed the Caliphate for himself. Some of 'Ali's soldiers did not accept the method of arbitration, since according to them, "God alone has the right to judge" [*la Hukum illa li-llah*], which can also be translated as "no governance except for God". As ʿAbdullah Sebt wrote in an article that referred to ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Khaliq:

> The first Khawarij were repeating the truth but their aim was unjust with it: *la hukum illa li-llah*. They wanted to revolt against the legitimate Caliph of the Muslims … That happened throughout history [i.e. according to the purist Salafi concept, the Khawarij always existed in Islamic history] and today's

> Khawarij [*Khawarij al-ʿAsr*] use the same word: the *hakimiyya* to excommunicate their rulers and legitimize the revolt against them.[24]

In a lecture, ʿAbdullah Sebt explained that:

> this sentence of *la hukum illa li-llah* is old in the vocabulary of the Khawarij. They used it to excommunicate the companions [of the Prophet] and to revolt against [the Caliph] ʿAli. [These thoughts] were transmitted among them [to the new generations] and then Sayyid Qutb used them … then the contemporary Khawarij developed these and divided *tawhid* into four parts: *uluhiyya*, *rububiyya*, *al-asma wa-l-sifat* and *al-hakimiyya*.[25]

After that, he argues that "there is no intelligent Muslim who thinks that governance is not for God". However, he asks why is it necessary to emphasize this, since it can be misleading and cause political difficulties. In his article, ʿAbdullah Sebt explains that the Salafis believe in the "application of God's rule on the Earth", but this does not mean the "narrow-minded Hakimiyya concept of today's Khawarij". According to him, God's rule means following all of the practices and rulings of Islam, and having a government that assures this (*iqamat al-hudud*). He rejects "the narrow-minded *hakimiyya*" propagated by Islamist movements.

ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Khaliq responded to ʿAbdullah Sebt in a religious letter (*risalah diniyyah*). In this, he states that "the Khawarij, when they told this word [*la hukum illa li-llah*] to ʿAli bin Abi Talib, did not demand the application of the *shariʿa* but disagreed with him because he accepted the arbitration between him and Muʿawiyah … Therefore not everybody is a Khariji who uses the words *la hukum illa li-llah*".[26] He thinks that revolution against the ruler is obligatory only if the ruler is openly an apostate and thinks that man-made law is as good as *shariʿa* or better. Sheikh ʿAbd al-Rahman explains the inclusion of *tawhid al-hukum* among the pillars of *tawhid* as a matter of choice, not a matter of sacred principle. There is no reason why a Salafi should strictly hold on to the idea of the three aspects of *tawhid*. One may also speak of just one pillar of *tawhid*, or of ten, if he so wishes.

One should note that when I asked ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Khaliq whether it was permissible for the ruled to overthrow the ruler under certain conditions, he refused to give me a clear answer, while the purists who today control Ihya' al-Turath respond with an unequivocal "no". Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, when the Muslim Brothers openly criticized the legitimacy of contemporary Arab regimes, including Kuwait, he had always argued that

it was not in the interests (*maslaha*) of the *umma* to touch on such issues in these political circumstances.

After the emergence of the activist current of Salafism, the Gulf regimes began to worry about potential criticism of hereditary monarchical systems and their alliances with the West. The Kuwaiti state had had enough problems with the Muslim Brothers in the 1980s, and it did not want to count the Salafis among its opponents. Therefore, the government began to support the purist Salafi faction led by ʿAbdullah Sebt against ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Khaliq. By supporting a loyal faction and gaining control over Ihya' al-Turath, the state expected to ensure the loyalty of the majority of Salafis, or at least to depoliticize them. As the result of the internal strife in the organization, the majority of the followers of ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Khaliq left the organization in 1997 and created their own group under the umbrella of "The Salafi Movement" (al-Haraka al-Salafiyya). After that, the nature of Ihya' al-Turath rapidly changed. The books of Sheikh ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Khaliq disappeared from the organization's publishing houses, and it instead began printing the works of the Saudi religious establishment. When I visited the organization, I was given a stack of booklets that expounded the political views of Ihya' al-Turath. These publications focus on two main issues: the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, and the question of jihad.

On the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, Ihya' al-Turath has printed the work, *ʿAbd al-Salam bin Barjas Al ʿAbd al-Karim: Dealing with the Ruler according to the Book and the Sunna*.[27] The author was a renowned purist cleric, known for his harsh criticism of activist Salafis. At the beginning of the treatise, he makes it clear that revolt against the ruler (*al-khuruj ʿala al-hakim*) is the corruption of religion and the world (*fasad al-din wa-l-dunya*), and that obedience is in the universal interest (*maslahat al-din wa-l-dunya*). Here he gives the example of Hajjaj bin Yusuf, the governor of Iraq between 695 and 714, known in the Islamic tradition for his unjust behaviour toward his subjects and for his cruelty. Despite this, the Prophet's companion did not revolt against him. According to the author, Hajjaj was no better than contemporary rulers, but contemporary Muslims are not equal to the Sahaba.[28] In addition, he forbids revolt against the Muslim ruler who does not follow correct religious practice. Ahmad bin Hanbal, the founder of the Hanbali *madhab* and one of the scholars who is most respected by Salafis, stood against those who wanted to remove the Abbasid Caliph because he adopted the Muʿtazila (speculative theology).[29]

The author gives a typical purist explanation of *hisba*, or *al-amr bi-l-maʿruf wa-l-nahy ʿan al-munkar* (commanding right, forbidding wrong). Although

he does not criticize the idea that *hisba* can be implemented by hand (*yadd*), tongue (*lisan*), and *qalb* (heart), he thinks that it should not lead to greater evil (*munkar akbar*). Therefore, only the ruler can use his hand or the *'ulama* when they intend to separate fighting parties. In other cases, the use of the hand – or in other words, using force to implement *hisba* – has to be ordered by the state or the ruler itself. In yet other cases, only implementation by tongue or heart is permitted, but conditions are attached to the former. It can be done by the *'ulama* during the Friday sermon but without publicly criticizing the ruler, since this can lead to disorder and revolt. The author proves his opinion with a *hadith* about the third Caliph Othman: "When the civil war broke out in the time of Othman, some of the people asked Usama bin Zayd [one of the companions of the Prophet]: You do not criticize Othman? He answered: What? Shall I criticize him in front of the people? No, I only can do it in privacy and thus not open the door to Evil."[30] This citation also reflects the common purist view that open criticism of the ruler is forbidden and that it should only be done in private by skilled religious scholars. Publicly, the *'ulama* can condemn those things that violate religious rules, but without relating them to the ruler.

The second main topic of the new purist discourse of Ihya' al-Turath is jihad, due to the increase in terrorist attacks in the last decade on the Arabian Peninsula and elsewhere in the world. Ihya' al-Turath – like other Islamic charities – has been accused of sponsoring jihadi organizations worldwide. The US Treasury Department accused the organization of giving financial support to two South Asian terrorist groups. The first is the Pakistani group Laskar e-Tayyiba, which was responsible *inter alia* for the 2001 December attacks on the Indian parliament. The second is the Bangladeshi organization Jamaat al-Mujahidin. Both groups are linked to al-Qaeda.[31] On the basis of these accusations, the US government demanded that the Kuwaiti state close down Ihya' al-Turath (as the Saudis had done with Mu'assasat al-Haramayn) after freezing its accounts in the US. However, the Kuwaiti government did not fulfil this request, claiming that there was no reliable evidence against Ihya' al-Turath. Most Islamists – even those who were otherwise ideologically opposed to the organization, including *haraki* Salafis – stood up for the organization. Although Ihya' al-Turath avoided the fate of Mu'assasat al-Haramayn, it came under near-total state control, and the purist's dominance became even more overwhelming. To avoid further accusations, Ihya' al-Turath put considerable effort into producing anti-jihadi propaganda. The organization published several books on the topic of jihad, and most of these are freely available in Salafi mosques worldwide. All of these publications reflect a strict purist agenda.

One of the most important and detailed of these books was written by a renowned Yemeni purist, Sheikh Abi Hassan al-Sulaymani, a pupil of the famous Yemeni purist scholar Muqbil al-Wadiʿi. The book, entitled *al-Tafjirat wa-l-Ightiyalat* (*The Bombings and the Murders*), claims to explain the reasons for jihadi activity and offers solutions to the problem. The author thinks that the main reason for the radicalization of Muslim youth is that some Salafi scholars have begun to openly criticize Muslim rulers and accuse them of hating Islam in truth and only being Muslims on the surface. Of course, this is a clear reference to *haraki* Salafis who, according to the author, care little about *daʿwa* and only focus on the issue of *hakimiyya*. This way of thinking inspired some young people who were ignorant of religious matters to take up weapons against their legitimate ruler. Suleymani thinks that although contemporary regimes are not truly Islamic, to revolt against them is inappropriate. He refers to a *hadith* to support his stance: "Always when an element of Islam is destroyed, the people will cling even more to the remaining."[32] The author explains that by this, Muhammad meant that other aspects of Islam can remain strong, even when the government is not truly Islamic. He also offers the example of the Companion of the Prophet who did not revolt against the Umayyad caliphs, although they were much worse in many respects than contemporary Arab and Muslim rulers.[33]

Ihya' al-Turath has also published a booklet in which the organization's ideological foundations are explained.[34] The authors dedicate a considerable part of the book to the question of jihad. They regard the presence of the Imam (the ruler) as the most important condition for waging jihad. In the absence of this, Muslims can launch a holy war only if an external enemy occupies their land (*jihad dafaʿ*, or defensive jihad; note that this is why most of the Salafis support the Palestinian resistance). Here one should note that jihadis share this opinion, but they regard their activities as defensive jihad against those who occupy Muslim lands, even if they are fighting in the land of the enemy.[35] However, the authors' counter-argument is that jihad can only be waged face-to-face with the enemy; suicide attacks and bombings can also harm Muslims, and this is forbidden in Islam. In their argument, they refer to an *aya* in the Qur'an: "If there had not been among them, unknown to you, believing men and women whom you would have trampled underfoot, inadvertently incurring guilt on their account – God brings whoever He will into His mercy – if the [believers] had been clearly separated, We would have inflicted a painful punishment on the disbelievers."[36]

SOURCES OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR ISLAMIC CHARITIES

Only a few academic studies deal with the issue of Islamic charitable organizations, and they mainly focus on their role in sponsoring terrorism.[37] No studies answer the question of how these charities acquire funding to carry out their projects. During my fieldwork in Kuwait, I tried to gather information about the financial background of Jamaʿiyyat Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami from my informants. However, making such inquiries always raises suspicions in the minds of Islamists, since western security services are also paying more attention to this topic. Once, when I asked one of the officials of Ihya' al-Turath how they financed their activities, he asked me directly which security service needed this information. I was able to collect data by means of informal conversations in *diwaniyahs* and other private meetings. Therefore, my analysis of this topic is far from complete but may provide directions for further research.

According to my observations, the two main sources of financial support for Ihya' al-Turath are the state and income from the Islamic financial sector. In Kuwait, all charitable organizations registered in the country receive government funding, which covers the salaries of the employees. However, all of my informants who were willing to speak about this issue admitted that Ihya' al-Turath receives further funding from the state budget due to its loyalty to the royal family. The organization plays an important role in the pursuit of Kuwait's ambitions to extend its international influence. Since it promotes a purist form of Salafism that legitimizes contemporary Arab regimes, the Gulf States share a common interest in supporting it. Financing purist groups helps to control them and ensures that they focus their activities on purifying religious practices and beliefs. In addition, the active presence of its charitable organizations significantly enhances Kuwait's influence in the host states. It suffices to mention that during the Lebanese election of 2009, the local branch of Ihya' al-Turath in Tripoli helped to recruit voters for those candidates whom the Kuwaiti government regarded as acceptable. It is possible that Ihya' al-Turath plays a similar role elsewhere, especially in Southeast Asian countries and in the Balkans.

Possibly the biggest supporter of Jamaʿiyyat Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami is the Islamic financial sector. Islamic banks and financial institutions have sponsored charities worldwide since their emergence in the second half of the twentieth century. Although Islam includes pronouncements on economic matters, modern *shariʿa*-based financial institutions were only established in the early 1970s. Until then, the Western financial system had been the only

financial system in the Islamic world. Islamic banking emerged for political, rather than economic, reasons. Its main trigger was the Arab defeat by Israel in the 1967 war. After this event, it became obvious that there would not be any political unity in the Middle East, either under the umbrella of Arab nationalism or pan-Islamism. The (re)discovery of the Islamic financial system was basically intended to palliate the failure of the above-mentioned political project. As Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan argue, "In the face of the impossibility of political union, the transnational dimension of Islamic finance and practices of solidarity stepped in to maintain the utopia of the unity of the Muslim World".[38] It is not surprising, therefore, that the Gulf States pursued mutual interstate cooperation in the Islamic world at the economic and social levels but strictly refused to give up any political sovereignty. The designers of the Islamic financial system wanted to create a "third way" between the capitalist and Marxist economic systems. The main idea behind it was the combination of free private ownership with social sensitivity and responsibility.[39] The Islamic banks' basic principle is the prohibition of interest (*riba'*). To avoid this, they offer alternative practices for their clients.

The Islamic financial sector of Kuwait is one of the strongest and plays its role in sponsoring charities. Three of the biggest banks in the country – the Kuwait Financial House, the Boubyan Bank, and the Kuwait International Bank – function according to *shariʿa* rules. In 2009, there were 53 Islamic investment companies in Kuwait.[40] Since most of these institutions form part of global financial networks, they cannot avoid cooperating with banks that use interest rates. To convert the *haram* to *halal*, Islamic financial institutions give the money they have earned with interest-rate-based transactions to charity. Islamic banks and investment companies also have to pay *zakat,* and a large part of this money also goes to support charitable organizations. Moreover, *shariʿa*-based financial institutions usually voluntarily donate huge amounts for relief purposes. Salafis close to Ihya' al-Turath are active in these institutions, or even own parts of them. The most important of these is the above-mentioned Khalid Sultan, a prominent member of the merchant class and the biggest shareholder in the Sultan Center investment company. Therefore, it is no wonder that charitable organizations gain the greatest part of their budgets from this sector.

CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters, I have shown that Salafism in Northern Lebanon is somewhat different from the forms of Salafism that one encounters elsewhere. In Northern Lebanon, Salafis do not constitute a large mass movement but can rather be seen as a learned vanguard that possesses widespread religious authority among a relatively extended base of followers. I analysed this Salafi community using social movement theories.

In the region in which I carried out my research, Salafism had become prominent due to several factors, which I analysed using the concept of opportunity structures. The specific opportunities consisted of the Shiʿite revival that led to increasing Sunni-Shiʿite tensions, changing patterns of religious authority in the Lebanese Sunni community, and support for Salafi *daʿwa* from the Gulf. I also mentioned a serious constraint for the *daʿwa*: jihadi activism and the harsh response of the authorities to it, which led other Salafis to be regarded with suspicion.

In the third chapter, I classified Lebanese Salafis, employing my own system of classification that was elaborated in the first chapter. I showed the transnational roots of the factionalization of Salafis, after which I compared their discourses on politics and Shiʿism. I showed that the *harakis* regard the Shiʿa as a dangerous heretical apostate sect whose members have always conspired against the Sunnis. Contemporary history is interpreted according to this framework. Purist Salafis condemn the Shiʿa because of their "deviant" beliefs, but they argue that differences should be resolved via religious debate. *Harakis* are generally politically active. They regard politics as inseparable from other realms of Islam. In Lebanon, they regard political participation as an essential means of stopping the so-called "Shiʿite expansion". Some purists are also politically active and try to expand their religious autonomy via political participation. Other purists, who I call purist-rejectionists, refuse political activism on the grounds that this can lead to deviance from the true path.

In addition, I analysed the mobilization structures of Lebanese Salafis, describing the structure of their networks and how these extended to the

Gulf and Europe. I also stressed the importance of patronage networks and the role played by transnational Salafi TV channels.

In the last chapter, I described the evolution and transformation of a transnational charity, the Revival of Islamic Heritage Society (RIHS) in Kuwait. The organization is one of the largest supporters of Salafism worldwide and the chief donor to purist Salafis in Lebanon. I analysed the RIHS in the context of the evolution of Kuwaiti Salafism and described how its ideological orientation was transformed by an internal debate between purists and *harakis*.

This report shows that it is only possible to gain an understanding of the manifestation of Salafism in a given locality if we analyse its transnational aspects. In Northern Lebanon, Salafism was able to become popular when local opportunities coincided with transnational ones. Salafi networks in this region are supported by charities in the Gulf. I demonstrated that Lebanese Salafi individuals form part of transnational networks and that the local discourse of Salafis is influenced by transnational trends. The transnational Salafi media plays an important role in the "Salafization" of the discourse of ordinary Muslims.

In short, we have to understand Salafism as a transnational movement. A discussion of the evolution of local groups and networks should analyse the local and the transnational context together and highlight transnational links, developments, and trends.

NOTES

FOREWORD

1 The most detailed report on Salafis in the Netherlands, by researchers of the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies of the University of Amsterdam, speaks of a small number of Salafi organisations, with little or no overlap in personnel with other Muslim organisations. From an attitude survey, the researchers conclude that 8 percent of Muslims over the age of 15 in the Netherlands hold 'strictly orthodox' religious attitudes that the authors believe to be compatible with Salafi thought. Those 8 percent are said to be 'susceptible to Salafism', but not actual Salafis. Ineke Roex, Sjef van Stiphout, and Jean Tillie, *Salafisme in Nederland: aard, omvang en dreiging*, Amsterdam: Instituut voor Migratie- en Etnische Studies, in cooperation with Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2010.
2 Martijn de Koning, *Zoeken naar een 'zuivere' islam: Geloofsbeleving en identiteitsvorming van jonge Marokkaans-Nederlandse moslims*, Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2008.
3 Roy has made this point in numerous public lectures and interviews; one variety of the argument may be found in: Olivier Roy, *Vers un islam européen*, Paris: Éditions Esprit, 1999.
4 Joas Wagemakers, 'De "culturen" van het salafisme', *ZemZem: Tijdschrift over het Midden-Oosten, Noord-Afrika en islam* 6, Nummer 3 (2010): 83-88. See also Joas Wagemakers, 'A quietist Jihadi-Salafi: the ideology and influence of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi', Ph.D. dissertation, Nijmegen: Radboud Universiteit, 2010.
5 Quintan Wiktorowicz, 'Anatomy of the Salafi movement', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 29 (2006): 207-239. Although it has been criticized on points of detail, this article remains one of the most important analyses of contemporary Salafism. See also the Introduction in Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, London: Hurst & Company, 2009.
6 See Wagemakers, 'A quietist Jihadi-Salafi'.
7 Stéphane Lacroix, 'Between revolution and apoliticism: Nasir al-Din al-Albani and his impact on the shaping of contemporary Salafism', in: Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, London: Hurst & Company, 2009, pp. 58-80.
8 François Burgat and Muhammad Sbitli, 'Les Salafis au Yémen ou … la modernisation malgré tout', *Chroniques yéménites* n° 10 (2003); Laurent Bonnefoy, 'How transnational is Salafism in Yemen?' in: Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, London: Hurst & Company, 2009, pp. 321-341; Noorhaidi Hasan, *Laskar Jihad: Islam, militancy and the quest for identity in post-New Order*

Indonesia, Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 2006. The militia was disbanded after fierce criticism of its political engagement by a leading Saudi Salafi authority, Rabi' bin Hadi al-Madkhali. The Salafi current from which it had emerged still exists and is known in Indonesia as the 'Yemenis'.

9 For various attempts to locate jihadis within or outside the Salafi tradition, see the contributions by Thomas Hegghammer, Reuven Paz, and Brynjar Lia in Roel Meijer's *Global Salafism*, pp. 244-300.

INTRODUCTION

1 Bernard Rougier, *Everyday Jihad*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007; Bilal Saab and Magnus Ranstorp, 'Securing Lebanon from the Threat of Salafist Jihadism', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 30, no. 10 (2007): 825-855; Tine Gade *Fatah al-Islam in Lebanon: Between global and local jihad*, Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI), 2007.

1 WHAT IS SALAFISM?

1 Bernard Haykel, *Revival and Reform in Islam: The Legacy of Muhammad al-Shawkani*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

2 Haykel, *Revival and Reform in Islam*, pp. 42-43.

3 Haykel, 'On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action' in Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2009, pp. 33-57. I wish to stress here that in Salafism, *Ijtihad* does not mean free and rational interpretation of the text. While Islamic reformists and the Shiʿites use the text as a basis for logical reasoning, Salafis only accept its literal meaning.

4 Muhammad bin ʿAbd al-Wahhab, *Kitab al-Tawhid*, Riyadh: Maktabat al-Haramayn, 2001.

5 Safar al-Hawali, 'Aqsam al-Tawhid', undated text, available online at: http://www.al-hawali.com/index.cfm?method=home.SubContent&contentID=872&keywords=%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%AF (accessed 2 September 2010).

6 Ibid.

7 W. Montgomery Watt, "Ash'ariyya", in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986.

8 Interview with a Palestinian Salafi sheikh, Tripoli, 17 October 2009.

9 Ibid. Alcohol was originally prohibited in Islam when one of the *sahaba* recited the Qur'an incorrectly after drinking. Wael B. Hallaq, *A history of Islamic Legal Theories: An Introduction to Sunnī usūl al-fiqh*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 242.

10 Joas Wagemakers, 'The Transformation of a Radical Concept: al-wala' wa-l-bara' in the Ideology of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi', in Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2009, pp. 84-87.

11 Quintan Wiktorowicz, 'The Salafi Movement in Jordan', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 32, no. 2 (2000): 219-240.
12 Quintan Wiktorowicz, 'Anatomy of the Salafi Movement', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 29, no. 3 (May 2006): 207-239, 217.
13 The Quraysh were the dominant tribe in Mecca in the pre-Islamic period.
14 Wiktorowicz, 2006, p. 217.
15 Ibid. 219.
16 Ibid. 220.
17 Ibid. 221.
18 Ibid. 222.
19 Ibid. 223.
20 Ibid. 227.
21 Thomas Hegghammer,.'Jihadi Salafis or Revolutionaries?: On Religion and Politics in the Study of Militant Islamism', in Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism*, pp. 244-266.
22 Ibid. 256.
23 Ibid. 258.
24 *Umma* means the larger Islamic community or nation; in this context, the global *umma* is being referred to.
25 Hegghammer, 2009, p. 250.
26 Brynjar Lia, 'Destructive Doctrinarians: Abu Musab al-Suri's Critique of the Salafis in the Jihadi Current', in Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism*, pp. 281-300.
27 See ibid.
28 During my fieldwork, I asked almost all of my Salafi informants about their views of organization, and almost always received similar answers.
29 See http://www.binbaz.org.sa/mat/1944 (accessed 19 September 2009).
30 bin Barjas bin Naser al ʿAbd al-Karim, ʿAbd al-Salam, *Mu'amalat al-Hukkam fi Dhu' al-Kitab wa-l-Sunna*, Kuwait: Jama'iyyat Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami, 2009, p. 17.
31 I consider the term *haraki* to be appropriate here, since the members of this faction call themselves by this term to explain their activist approach towards Islam.
32 Some of them even add *tawhid al-hakimiyya* (oneness of the governance) as the fourth component of *tawhid*. In the fifth chapter, I will discuss the debate surrounding *tawhid al-hakimiyya* in Kuwait.
33 See, for example, Hakim al-Mutayri, *al-Hurriyya aw al-Tawfan*, Beirut: al-Mu'assasa al-'Arabiyya li-l-Dirasat wa-l-Nashr, 2008, pp. 21-25.
34 Salman al-ʿAwda, *Limadha nakhaf min al-naqd*, Islam al-Yawm, 2004, pp. 43-44.

2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF SALAFISM IN TRIPOLI AND NORTHERN LEBANON

1 Mohamed-Ali Adraoui, 'Salafism in France: Ideology, Practices and Contradictions', in Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism*, pp. 364-383.
2 Conversation with Din Wahid, Leiden, 6 October 2010.
3 C.L. Gilliot, "ʿUlama", in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986.

4 Ibid; Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002, pp. 38-60.
5 Fuad I.Khuri, 'The Ulama: A Comparative Study of Sunni and Shiʿa Religious Officials', *Middle Eastern Studies* 23, no. 3 (1987): 291-312, 291-312.
6 Ibid. 296.
7 Ibid. 299.
8 It is rather a vague category, referring mostly to those who left al-Jamaʿa al-Islamiyya or Harakat al-Tawhid al-Islami and administer charity endowments, serving their own aims by using their transnational contacts and relations to the Lebanese politicians.
9 The original name is Tablighi Jamaat in Urdu, since the movement has roots in India in the first half of the twentieth century. See Mumtaz Ahmad, 'Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia: The Jamaat-i Islami and Tablighi Jamaat of South Asia', in *Fundamentalisms Observed*, Chicago: Universtity of Chicago Press, 1991, pp. 457-530.
10 Interview with Samira, the owner of an Islamic bookshop in Abu Samra, Tripoli, 29 November 2009.
11 They became involved mostly because the Muslim Brothers dominate the quarter around the al-Rahma mosque.
12 Interview with a Salafi sheikh, Tripoli, 28 November 2009.
13 Interview with Wadi Khalid Ali, 7 November 2009.
14 Mario Diani, 'The Concept of Social Movement', in *Readings in Contemporary Political Sociology*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000, pp. 155-176, 165.
15 In fact, the correctness of ritual lies at the centre of Salafi life. Salafis believe that the key to salvation is correct belief combined with correct practice. Any other activity, such as politics or *jihad,* can be based only on this.
16 Charles Price, Donald Nonini, and Erich Fox Tree, 'Grounded Utopian Movements: Subjects of Neglect', *Anthropological Quarterly* 81, 1 (2008): 127-58.
17 Ibid. 127.
18 Ibid. 145.
19 It is a frequently cited hadith that can be found in Sahih Muslim.
20 Interview with one of the first Lebanese Salafis who asked me not to mention his name in my publication, Tripoli, 27 November 2009.
21 Sidney Tarrow, 'States and Opportunities: The political structuring of social movements', in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 41-61, 42.
22 Herbert Kitschelt, 'Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest', *British Journal of Political Science* 16 (1986): 57-86; Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*, Chicago: Universtity of Chicago Press, 1982; Tarrow, 1996.
23 William A. Gamson and David S. Meyer, 'Framing Political Opportunity' in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 275-290.
24 Glenn E. Robinson, 'Hamas as a Social Movement', in *Islamic Activism, A Social Movement Theory Approach*, Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004, pp. 112-139.

25 Ana Belén Soage, 'Rashid Rida's Legacy', *The Muslim World* 98, no. 1 (2008): 1-23.
26 Interview with Sheikh Muhammad Sheikh Muhhamad ʿAbd al-Ghani, Tripoli, 18 November 2009.
27 Interview with Sheikh ʿAli Taha, Tripoli, 5 December 2009.
28 The decline in the popularity of the Left was partly the result of the split in the PLO into a pro-Syrian and an anti-Syrian faction (the latter led by Yasir Arafat) after Damascus's intervention in the Lebanese civil war in 1976. Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, London: Pluto Press, 2007.
29 Saeed Shehabi, 'The Role of Religious Ideology in the Expansionist Policies of Saudi Arabia', in Madawi Al-Rasheed, *Kingdom Without Borders: Saudi Arabia's Political, Religious and Media Frontiers*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008, pp. 183-198.
30 Interview with Sheikh Hilal Turkomani, Miryata, 16 October 2009.
31 He was not willing to share his biographical details with me, but I gathered some information about him from his former disciples.
32 ʿAbdullah al-Harari was born in the Ethiopian province of Harar and settled in Beirut in the 1940s. The name al-Ahbash refers to the Sheikh's Ethiopean origins (Habashi, pl. al-Ahbash).
33 Mustafa Kabha and Haggai Erlich, 'Al-Ahbash and Wahhabiyya: Interpretations of Islam', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 38, no. 4 (2006): 519-538.
34 Ibid. 526.
35 Interview with a Salafi sheikh in Qubbeh region, Tripoli, 18 October 2009.
36 Interviews with Salafi individuals and witnesses of the events; Bernard Rougier, *Everyday Jihad*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007, pp. 113-140.

3 THE EMERGENCE OF SALAFI FACTIONS IN TRIPOLI

1 Terje Ostebo, 'Growth and Fragmentation: The Salafi Movement in Contemporary Bale, Ethiopia', in Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism*, pp. 342-363; Laurent Bonnefroy, 'How Transnational is Salafism in Yemen?', in Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism,* pp. 321-341; Quintan Wiktorowicz, 'The Salafi Movement in Jordan', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 32, no. 2 (2000): 219-240.
2 Interview with Sheikh ʿAli Taha, Tripoli, 5 December 2009.
3 According to some sources, the Syrians wanted Halabi to be elected Mufti of the Republic to control the Sunni religious establishment. Interview with a sheikh in Dar al-Fatwa, Tripoli, 26 November 2009.
4 The battle took place in the mountainous Dinniyeh region. A veteran jihadi, who had fighting experience in Afghanistan, set up with his followers a training camp in the mountains near Tripoli, to train them and send them to Chechnya. The group has allegedly been responsible for several attacks against churches in Tripoli. The fight with the army erupted when the group took over the building of DaʿI al-Islam al-Shahhal's radio station in Sir al-Dinniyeh and left 30 dead, among them 11 soldiers, five civilians, and 14 Salafi militants. Rougier, *Everyday Jihad*, pp. 229-241.

5 Sheikh Daʿi's decision proved to be the right one, as in the same year, the Lebanese military court sentenced him to death in his absence.
6 'Mu'assasat al-Haramayn: Azmat al-Mu'assis wa-l-Mu'assasa', 6 June 2004, available from www.alarabiya.net/articles/2004/06/06/4088.html (accessed 3 March 2010).
7 Madawi al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State: Islamic Voices from a New Generation,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 64.
8 Zakariyya al-Masri, *al-Quwwa al-Dualiyya fi Muwajahat al-Sahwa al-Islamiyya*, without publisher, 2004, p. 35.
9 Usually they distinguish between the Shiʿite elite and commoners. Salafis regard the Shiʿite elite as infidels because they excommunicate the Sahaba but call the rest heretics led astray by their leaders. This was revealed in several of my interviews in Lebanon and the Gulf.
10 In the first chapter, I mentioned the importance of the Companions of the Prophet for Salafis. The first three Caliphs – Abu Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthman – are the most important in their eyes.
11 Guido Steinberg, 'Jihadi Salafism and the Shiʿis: Remarks about the Intellectual Roots of anti-Shiʿism', in Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism*, pp. 107-125.
12 He told me that Hizbullah or somebody close to the organization had poisoned him, leading him to age rapidly, after which physicians saved his life. Interview with Sheikh Zakariya al-Masri, Tripoli, 10 November 2009.
13 Zakariyya al-Masri, *Dawr al-Imbaraturiyya al-Shiʿiyya al-Shuyuʿiyya,* Tarablus: Marjaz Hamza, 2007, pp. 46-47.
14 Qur'an, Surat at-Tawba 34.
15 Sunni scholars used the story of ʿAbdullah bin Saba' throughout to delegitimize Shiʿite Islam, while Shiʿites regard this as a mere compilation. Many of them even question the existence of ʿAbdullah bin Saba'. Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shiʿi Islam: The History & Doctrines of Twelver Shiʿism*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985, p. 46.
16 Al-Masri, *Dawr al-Imbaraturiyya al-Shiʿiyya al-Shuyuʿiyya*, pp. 67-69.
17 Ibid. 84-87.
18 Salafis usually argue that the 1980-1988 Iraq-Iran war was provoked by the latter, and depict Saddam Hussein as a hero who stopped Iran with the help of the Gulf monarchies, which financed his military. See for example Al-Masri, *Dawr al-Imbaraturiyya al-Shiʿiyya al-Shuyuʿiyya,* p. 35.
19 Interview with Sheikh Zakariyya al-Masri, Tripoli, 10 November 2009.
20 Nusayriyya is a reference to the Alavite sect that is mostly used by Sunnis and has a pejorative meaning.
21 The Alavites are part of Shiʿite Islam and constitute the majority of the population on the Syrian coast. They have dominated Syrian political life since the Assad clan, an Alavite family, came to power in 1970.
22 Interview with Sheikh Zakariyya al-Masri, 10 November 2009.
23 Sermon of Sheikh Zakariyya al-Masri in Hamza Mosque, Tripoli, 05 June 2009.
24 The angel who transmitted the Qur'an to Muhammad.
25 Ahmad Taha, *Harb Lubnan wa-l-Khatar al-Shiʿi al-Qadim*, unpublished, 2006, p. 48.
26 Ibid. 58.

27 Semon of Sheikh Hilal Turkomani, Miryata, 9 May 2008.
28 Interview with Sheikh ʿAdnan Umama, Majdal ʿAnjar, 6 December 2009.
29 Sermon by Sheikh Zakariya al-Masri, Hamza Musque, Tripoli, 29 May 2009.
30 Ibid.
31 Many Yemeni Salafis joined the Islah party to achieve more effective political representation. Nabil al-Bakri, 'Al-Salafiyya al-Yamaniyya ... Bayn al-In'izaliyya wa-l-Harakiyya', *Islamonline*, 27 March 2007, available from http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?c=ArticleA_C&pagename=Zone-Arabic-Daawa%2FDWALayout&cid=1173695245523 (accessed 23 October 2007).
32 Interview with sheikh Hilal Turkomani, 17 October 2009.
33 ʿAbd al-Ghani, Muhammad, Bashar al-'Ajl, and Khalid ʿAbd al-Qader, 'Fatwa bi-Jawaz al-Musharaka fi-l-Majlis al-Niyabi al-Lubnani Tarshihan wa Intikhaban wa Shurutan', Waqf al-Turath al-Islami, 2009.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
36 According to one of the members of the *ʿulama* council, although Shiʿites and Sunnis together make up more than 50% of the Lebanese population, it is questionable whether Shiʿites are Muslims or not. In such a case, the country cannot be regarded as Islamic.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
39 Interview with Sheikh Muhhamad ʿAbd al-Ghani, 25 November 2009.
40 *Fata'ir* is traditional Shami (formerly Greater Syria) food.
41 Interview with Sheikh Wisam, 8 October 2009.
42 Ibid.

4 MOBILIZATION STRUCTURES

1 Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, 'Networks of Faith: Interpersonal Bonds and Recruitment to Cults and Sects', *The American Journal of Sociology* 85, no. 6 (1980): 1376-1395; Jeffrey Broadbent, 'Movement in Context: Thick Networks and Japanese Environmental Protest', in *Social Movements and Networks*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 204-229; Florence Passy and Marco Giugni, 'Social Networks and Individual Perceptions: Explaining Differential Participation in Social Movements', *Sociological Forum*16, no. 1 (2001): 123-153; David A. Snow, Luis A. Zurcher and Sheldon Ekland-Olson, 'Social Networks and Social Movements: A Microstructural Approach to Differential Recruitment', *American Sociological Review* 45, no. 5 (1980): 787-801.
2 Guilain Denoux, *Urban Unrest in the Middle East: A comparative Study of Informal Networks in Egypt, Iran and Lebanon*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.
3 Wiktorowicz, "The Salafi Movement in Jordan"; Singerman, Diane. "The Networked World of Islamist Social Movements". In *Islamic Activism, A Social Movement Theory Approach*, 143-163. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004.

4 Ibid. 151-157.
5 Sermon of Sheikh Ibn ʿUthaymin, undated, available online at: www.ibnothaymeen.com/all/khotab/article_460.shtml (accessed 12 October 2010).
6 Interview with Sheikh Saʿd al-Din al-Kibbi, ʿAkkar, 6 October 2009.
7 Annabelle Böttcher, 'Sunni and Shiʿi Networking in the Middle East', in *Shaping the Current Islamic reformation*, London/Portland, OR: Frank Cass Publishers, 2005, pp. 41-62.
8 A. Nizar Hamzeh, 'Clientalism, Lebanon: Roots and Trends', *Middle Eastern Studies* 37, no. 3 (2001): 167-179; Suad Joseph, 'Brother/Sister Relationships: Connectivity, Love and Power in the Reproduction of Patriarchy in Lebanon', *American Ethnologist* 21, no. 1 (1994): 50-73; Jihad Makhoul and Lindsey Harrison, 'Intercessory Wasta and Village Development in Lebanon', *Arab Studies Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (2004): 25-41.
9 Rumour has it that the Ahbash were able to acquire millions of dollars to spread their ideas; my local interviewees usually pointed to certain foreign embassies as the source of this fortune. Nizar al-Halabi is rumoured to possess five or six Western passports.
10 Interview with Sheikh ʿAbd al-Hadi Wahbe, Beirut, 16 November 2009.
11 Interview with Sheikh Khaled Zaʿrur, Doha, 29 July 2010.
12 He should not be confused with the leading member of the Bahraini opposition with the same name.
13 Saudi *harakis* call their movement *al-Sahwa al-Islamiyya* (Islamic Awakening). The Sahwa movement emerged on the eve of the 1991 Gulf War, when *haraki* Salafis protested against the Saudi government's decision to allow the US to send soldiers to Saudi Arabia. See al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State,* pp. 59-101.
14 Further investigation is needed to find out whether the funds from these wealthy individuals reach the activists directly or through endowments.
15 Interview with a Dutch Salafi Sheikh with Syrio-Lebanese origins, The Hague, 6 July 2011.
16 Ibid. It would be interesting to make a comparison between the dynamics of kinship connectivity in Lebanon and the Gulf. Suad Joseph argues that Lebanese society is neither corporatist (like the Gulf countries) nor individualistic, but rather a mix of the two. Since individual autonomy is as determining in the life of an individual as patriarchy or kinship, this might make it easier to live a life in a different location from the extended family. Suad Joseph, 'Connectivity and Patriarchy among Urban Working-Class Arab Families in Lebanon', *Ethos* 21, no. 4 (1993): 452-484.
17 Interview with a Dutch Salafi Sheikh.
18 See for example: http://www.ahlalhdeeth.com/vb/showthread.php?t=88912.
19 Ibid.
20 Al-Safir newspaper, 17 May 2005.
21 See Al-Sharq Al-Awsat newspaper, 20 Augustus 2008.
22 The mediation on the ground is managed by the Swiss anthropologist Patrick Haenni. Interview with Patrick Haenni, Lausanne, 11 July 2009.
23 Interview with Safan al-Zaʿbi, Tripoli, 3 October 2009.

24 Omayma ʿAbdel-Latif, 'Trends in Salafism', in *Islamist Radicalisation: The Challange for Euro-Mediterranean Relations*, Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2008, p. 83.
25 These voters were mobilized directly by Jamaʿiyyat Waqf al-Turath al-Islami. *Haraki* preachers who enjoy the support of RIHS are possibly able to mobilize many more people.
26 Nathan Field and Ahmed Hamam, 'Salafi satellite TV in Egypt', *Arab Media & Society* (Spring 2009).

5 THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSNATIONAL ISLAMIC CHARITY ORGANIZATIONS

1 A. Zysow, 'Zakat', in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam,* Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986.
2 Janine Clark, 'Social Movement Theory and Patron-Clientelism: Islamic Social Institutions and the Middle Class in Egypt, Jordan and Yemen', *Comparative Political Studies* 37, no. 8 (2004).
3 See al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State,* pp. 106-120.
4 Mary Ann Tétreault, *Stories of Democracy: Politics and Society in Contemporary Kuwait*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2000, p. 33.
5 Rajab al-Damanhour, *al-Tayyarat al-Shiʿiyya al-Kuwaytiya … al-Tashakkulat wa-l-Masarat (The Kuwaiti Shiite Streams … The Groups and their Development)*, 3 November 2009, available from http://islamyoon.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?c=ArticleA_C&cid=1235628915074&pagename=Zone-Arabic-Daawa%2FDWALayout (accessed 5 March 2010).
6 Interview with one of the first Kuwaiti Salafis, Kuwait, 11 January 2010.
7 Interview, Kuwait, 21 January 2010.
8 Interview with ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Khaliq, Kuwait, 13 February 2010.
9 Yvonne Haddad, 'Islamists and the »Problem of Israel«: The 1967 awakening', *Middle East Journal* 46, no. 2 (1992): 266-285.
10 Haddad, 1992, p. 267.
11 Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003, p. 285.
12 http://www.dewan.ws/ (accessed 18 April 2010).
13 Nowadays, every Kuwaiti Salafi sheikh usually appears at *diwaniyya*s on a regular basis, and the dates can be found on their websites. See, for instance, the website of the Madkhali Salafi Sheikh Salim al-Tawil, http://www.saltaweel.com/schedule, accessed 18 April 2010.
14 I will discuss the issue of politics and Salafism in Kuwait below.
15 Interview with Salim al-Nashi, the former director of the politburo of al-Tajammuʿ al-Islami al-Salafi (Salafi Islamic Gathering), 13 January 2010.
16 Falah al-Mudayris, *Al-Jamaʿa al-Salafiya fi-l-Kuwait: al-Nasha't wa-l-Fikr wa-l-Tatawwur (1965-1999)*, Kuwait: Dar Qortas li-l-Nashr, 1999, pp. 7-8.
17 ʿAbd al-Khaliq, ʿAbd al-Rahman. *al-Muslimun wa-l-'Amal al-Siyasi*, undated book accessible online at: http://www.salafi.net.

18 Those refer to a *hadith* where the Prophet ordered Muslims to expel Jews and Christians from the Peninsula.
19 Al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State,* p. 67.
20 Usually Salafis regard *tawhid al-'uluhiyya*, *tawhid al-rububiyya,* and *tawhid al-asma' wa-l-sifat* as the three pillars of Tawhid.
21 ʿAbd al-Khaliq, ʿAbd al-Rahman. *al-Sirat*, Kuwait: no publisher, 2000. www.salafi.net, no page numbers.
22 Interview with Nasser al-Khalidi, 26 January 2010.
23 William E. Shephard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism: A Translation and Critical Analysis of Social Justice in Islam*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996, p. 117.
24 Undated audio recording of the debate between Sheikh ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Khaliq and ʿAbdullah Sebt.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 bin Barjas bin Naser al ʿAbd ul-Karim, ʿAbd ul-Salam. *Mu'amalat al-Hukkam fi Dhu' al-Kitab wa-l-Sunna*. Kuwait: Jama'iyyat Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami, 2009.
28 Ibid. 11-12.
29 Ibid. 12.
30 Ibid. 48.
31 Roy Bhaskar, 'Terrorism in Bangladesh: Monster Child of BNP Jamaat', *South Asia Analysis Group*, 17 November 2009, available from http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/%5Cpapers36%5Cpaper3509.html (accessed 17 March 2010); 'Kuwait charity denies Qaeda links', *Kuwait Times*, 15 June 2008.
32 Abi Hasan al-Sulaymani, *al-Tafjirat wa-l-Ightiyalat,* Kuwait: Jama'iyyat Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami, 2008, p. 31.
33 Ibid. 32.
34 *Manhaj al-Jama'iyya li-l-Da'wa wa-l-Tawjih*, Kuwait: Jama'iyyat Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami, 1997.
35 Ibid.
36 Surah 48, ayah 25, Abdel Haleem, M. A. S., trans. *The Qur'an*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 336.
37 Loretta Napoleoni, *Modern Jihad: Tracing the Dollars Behind the Terror Networks*, London/Sterling Virginia: Pluto Press, 2003.
38 Jonathan Benthall and Jerome Bellion-Jourdan, *The Charitable Crescent: Politics of Aid in the Muslim World*. London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003.
39 Timur Kuran, 'Islamic Economics and the Islamic Subeconomy', *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 9, no. 4 (1995): 155-173.
40 See http://www.gulfbase.com/Site/Interface/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?n=97832.

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INDEX